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Things 'Necessary' and 'Unnecessary': Trash and Trifles in Early Modern England

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D.Phil

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May 2015

WORK NOT SUBMITTED ELSEWHERE FOR EXAMINATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature.....

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University of Sussex

Katrina Marchant D.Phil

Things 'Necessary' and 'Unnecessary': Trash and Trifles in Early Modern England, 1519-1614

Summary

This thesis investigates the shifting representation of trash and trifles in the literature and art of sixteenth and early seventeenth century England. It connects previously disparate critical fields – religion, politics, national identity, travel, literary criticism – in order to offer new perspectives on the period. The investigation of the terms ‘trash’ and ‘trifles’ at the centre of this project reinstates a crucial literary perspective to the historical study of early modern England’s crises in spiritual and material value, whilst retaining a keen awareness of the importance of interconnected historical contexts ranging from the mercantile to the spiritual and the cultural.

I have traced the connected development of the terms trash and trifles across the period 1519-1614, and closely examined their use in response to various crises in value, whether spiritual or mercantile. How writers of polemic and drama develop a language in which to articulate such crises, and the ways in which that language necessarily combines elements of both the spiritual and the mercantile, is a central theme. Key elements of this development are marked by Queen Katherine Parr’s invective about the mercantile corruption of spiritual treasure with material papal ‘tryfles’; Sir Thomas Smith’s assertion of the spiritual immorality of material ‘trifles’; Thomas Harriot and John White’s presentation of the mercantile and spiritual benefit of exporting trash and trifles to the New World; and in the staging of trash and trifles in a series of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century plays which, I argue, were in part designed to mount a defense against anti-theatrical allegations regarding the effeminate valuelessness of playing.

This thesis illustrates how the deployment of the terms trash and trifles in early modern England can be productively used to trace the shaping of the Protestant English commonwealth as a distinct, secure and valuable entity in an unstable and increasingly global post-Reformation world.

Notes on the text and abbreviations

I have retained the original spellings from primary texts as far as possible, including unmodified i/j and u/v spellings, with the exception of the long 's', and have expanded contractions where necessary.

Dates are given New Style (i.e. with each year assumed to begin on 1st January rather than 25th March).

TCP refers to Text Creation Partnership
EEBO refers to Early English Books Online
OED refers to the Oxford English Dictionary
LION refers to Literature Online
SPO refers to State Papers Online

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Introduction

Queen Katherine Parr confesses in *The Lamentacion of a Synner* (1547) to having led an 'euill, & wretched former life' in which she 'enbrased, receyued, and esteemed vayne, folish, and feyned tryfles'.¹ Moreover, she states:

I forsoke the spirituall honoring of the true liuyng god, & worshipped visible idoles, and ymages made of mennes handes, beleuing by them to haue gotten heaven, yea to say the truthe, I made a great ydol of my selfe: For I loved my selfe better then god. And certaynely looke howe many thinges are loued or preferred in our hartes before god, so many are taken and esteemed for ydolles, and false goddes.²

While she accepts culpability for her own part in her sin, she also accuses 'the bisshoppe of Rome' for placing 'rifraf' before her, and before her fellow Christians, 'in his tyranny', which has done 'so great an injury and displeasure to almighty god our father...[by] treade[ing] under foote Christ, his only begotten & welbeloued Sonne'.³ She claims to have been saved from these vain 'feyned tryfles' and 'rifraf' by her husband, Henry VIII, whom she calls 'Moses'.⁴ These were not only religious items associated with 'papisty' – Henry's religious zeal had prompted a re-evaluation of the value of all material goods. Just like the biblical Moses, Henry has vanquished his 'Pharao', the 'bishop of Rome'; according to Katherine, Henry is 'suche a godlie & learned kynge...[who] with the vertue & force of goddes worde, hath taken awaye the vayles, & mistes of erroures, and brought vs to the knowledge of the truthe, by the lyghte of Goddes worde'.⁵

Despite her aversion to the 'rifraf' of the 'bisshoppe of Rome' and her renunciation of all worldly 'feyned tryfles', her rejection of them was not total.

¹ Queen Katharine Parr, *The Lamentacion of a Synner, Made by Ye Most Vertuous Ladie, Quene Caterin, Bewayling the Ignoraunce of Her Blind Life: Set Furth and Put in Print at the Instaunt Desire of the Righte Gracious Ladie Caterin Duchesse of Suffolke, [and] the Earnest Requeste of the Right Honourable Lord, William Parre, Marquesse of North Hampton* (Imprinted at London: In Fletestrete at the signe of the Sunne ouer agaynste the conduyte by Edwarde Whitchurche, the. v. day of Nouember, in the yere of our Lord, 1547), A.1^r. From EEBO.

² Ibid., A.4^r.

³ Ibid., A.4^v-5^r.

⁴ Ibid., D.6^r.

⁵ Ibid.

Instead, Katherine relied on 'tryfles' in the form of imported commodities to ornament her body and assert her regal status. Evidence for this is shown in the full-length, oil-on-panel portrait, attributed to Master John (c.1545) (Figure 1), which she commissioned:



Figure 1. *Katherine Parr*, attributed to Master John (c.1545). © National Portrait Gallery, London

Her clothing uses the finest materials, many of which would have been imported, such as the gold and silver thread used to decorate the fabric of her dress which was not produced in England until at least the 1590s.⁶ Equally, since pearls were not found in English waters, those that heavily decorate her dress and hood must also have been imported.

She is shown standing on an oriental carpet, which is also conspicuously foreign, probably having been manufactured and imported from 'what is now a part of Turkey'.⁷ Queen Katherine was '[t]he first Englishwoman to have herself depicted standing on an oriental carpet', a motif imported from continental portraiture.⁸ The oriental carpet was a symbolic object within Flemish art, usually 'reserved...for works featuring the Virgin Mary', which Queen Katherine adopted for her own imagery as 'a visual affirmation of royal singularity and feminine piety.'⁹ She seems to have found no contradiction between the use of such foreign finery and anxieties about making 'a great ydol of [her] self'.

Despite the apparent contradiction, Queen Katherine uses this portrait for the purpose of regal self-fashioning. Alongside the foreign imports, Katherine has chosen to be depicted wearing jewellery that announced her status as England's queen. The most obvious item, because of its size, is the cameo girdle that hangs from her waist. Susan E. James explains that cameos had 'become one of the hallmarks of the portraiture of England's queens.'¹⁰ However, Queen Katherine is the only one of Henry's wives to be painted wearing a crown, albeit in the form of a brooch – in fact, even in the next generation, apart from the coronation portrait of Elizabeth I, none of the queens regnant of Europe were painted wearing a crown in any form. Queen Katherine Parr is using these imported mercantile trifles to shape and secure her regal identity; they form part of establishing 'her own independent mask of royalty...[and] self-justification.'¹¹ Such strategies were necessitated by Queen Katherine's unenviable position as Henry's childless sixth wife while his

⁶ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass point out that, 'in 1611, a Frenchwoman was brought to London to teach apprentices to make gold and silver thread under the patronage of the Countess of Bedford.' [Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.25.]

⁷ Ibid., p.47.

⁸ Susan James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), p.97.

⁹ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.103.

¹¹ Ibid., 144-145.

fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was still living in England and his third wife, Jane Seymour, was being resurrected, as the mother of his heir, in the painting of 'The Family of Henry VIII' (c.1545). With this portrait Katherine asserted her royalty and its associated rights as Henry's wife and step-mother to his children; through this portrait she may furthermore have been laying the foundations for her right to stand as England's regent should Henry die before Prince Edward reached his majority.

The need for Queen Katherine to publically assert her royal status provides justification for adorning herself with the foreign commodities that could otherwise have been regarded as fripperies, 'tryfles' or trash. The Doctor in Sir Thomas Smith's *Discourse of the Commonweal of This Realm of England* (manuscript 1549, printed 1581) lists the foreign goods imported by the 'strangers' that he classifies as necessities to prevent the English people living 'grosly' or 'barbarously'.¹² In establishing that list, he shows that certain things are 'necessary' for different social groupings – the Husbandman's livelihood depends upon imports of 'Iron, Salt, Tarre, Pitch', on his wool being transformed by another party and upon his ability to afford 'Linnen, & Wollen, & Leather' – the Gentleman, on the other hand, has a longer list.¹³ He 'must buy Wynes, Spices, Silkes, Armour, Glasse to glase his house wythall: Iron also for Tooles, Weapons, and other Instruments necessary: as Salt, Oyles, & many other diuerse thinges'.¹⁴ These are necessary imports to ensure the continuation of the Gentleman's livelihood, lifestyle and status. Of particular interest, however, are the imports that the Doctor classifies as necessary for the continuation of a specific kind of lifestyle. These luxury items, 'Wynes, Spices, & Silkes', are additions to life, rather than necessary for it – embodiments of vanity in Queen Katherine's terms – which makes them commodities that other pamphleteers and polemicists classified as trash or trifles. For Smith they are necessary requirements for civilised living. The definition of something as necessary or unnecessary, as treasure or trash, was not simply

¹² Sir Thomas Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination of Certayne Ordinary Complaints, of Diuers of Our Country Men in These Our Dayes Which Although They Are in Some Part Vniust [and] Friulous, yet Are They All by Vvay of Dialogues Thoroughly Debated [and] Discussed* (Imprinted at London: In Fleetstreate, neere vnto Saincte Dunstones Church, by Thomas Marshe, 1581), D.4r. From EEBO.

¹³ Ibid., D.3v.

¹⁴ Ibid., D.3v-D.4r.

reliant upon who was assessing it; instead it could depend on who owned and displayed it. 'Wynes, Spyces, & Silkes' were a necessary badge to display an individual's noble status. Katherine Parr's imported cloth and gems were legitimate because of her position as queen of England; without that nobility those same items were rendered unnecessary and became merely, trash and trifles.

Exploring the complex ways in which the early modern English deployed and shaped the meaning of words such as trash and trifles presents a new perspective on the period, not only in terms of its literature, but also its religion, politics and national identity. The specific words used to describe and classify objects or events serve to elucidate the lived experience of individuals in early modern England. Studying the way in which such words are used – how they cluster together, their synonyms and antonyms – offers a new sense of their use in early modern England, and the part they played in the defining debates of the age.

This thesis is particularly concerned with the cultural work undertaken when an author chooses to use words that are used to denote value, or rather, in the case of trash and trifles, a lack of value. Additionally, it is not only relevant to examine the terms 'trash' and 'trifles' but also to set out the semantic range of synonyms and antonyms that includes these terms. That semantic range includes the antonym treasure, which features in Smith's *Discourse* to group the necessary goods that 'foreign' merchants trading in England were accused of 'exhauste[ing]...out of this realme' in large quantities.¹⁵ Due to its implicit connotation of high value the word treasure is used as the principal counterpoint for trash and trifles throughout the early modern period and within this thesis. Katherine Parr's use of the words 'tryfles' and 'rifraf', the Doctor's concern, in Smith's *Discourse*, that foreign merchants may make 'prices of euery *trifle*', the assertion in the anonymous 'Dutch Church Libel' (1593) that 'Ye strangers y^t doe inhabite in this lande... transport goods, & bring vs *gawds* good store', and Iago's description (in *Othello*) of the courtesan Bianca as 'this *trash*' [emphasis mine] are examples of the semantic range of valuelessness that this thesis explores.¹⁶

¹⁵ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G.1^r.

¹⁶ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, C.2^r; Anonymous, 'A Libell, fixe vpon the French Church Wall, in London. Ann^o 1593' also known as 'The Dutch Church Libel' (*Libel Pamphlet*) MS. Don. d.152.f.4v, Bodleian Library reproduced in Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds: Elizabethan England's Infidel Trade' in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 207-222; William

The example of Katherine Parr is a useful starting point: by employing the words 'tryfles' and 'rifraf' to describe the items that Henry had saved her from improperly valuing, she positions them as dangerously worthless in their potential to deceive. In pressing ahead with the Reformation and naming himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, Henry had not only separated England from the spiritual authority of Rome and appropriated the wealth of the monasteries through their Dissolution; he had also shown his subjects, including his wife, the true value of things. Implicit in this is the admission, from a queen of England, that she had, at least for a time, been guilty of improperly valuing the 'trifles' and 'rifraf' of the 'bishop of Rome'. The power these 'tryfles' have to deceive is shown to be universal, affecting those at the very top of society and requiring the learning and moral sense of the king for that power to be neutralised. Although the Reformation legally ended papal authority in England, the 'bishop of Rome', still held spiritual power over much of Christendom – the threat of his 'tryfles' remained just beyond England's borders. Due to the continuing proximity of this universal threat, England's vigilance had to remain similarly constant.

The first recorded use of 'trash' as a noun within a printed text, to mean '[a]nything of little or no worth or value', appears in John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (first performed c.1519), when Crafty Conueyaunce mocks Magnyfycence for losing 'his plate of syluer, and such trasshe'.¹⁷ Prior to this, trash was used as a verb, meaning to betray, attack and destroy; it is used in this way in John Lydgate's *The hystroye, sege and dystruccyon of Troye* (manuscript produced c.1420; first printed 1513), when the Greeks "Trasshe[d] the cyte".¹⁸ This destructive implication is also found alongside the sense of valuelessness in the noun and its synonyms. By using the word 'tryfle' Katherine Parr employs a synonymous term within the semantic range of valuelessness. From as early as 1375, 'tryfle' was used to connote 'A small article of little intrinsic value; a toy, trinket, bauble, knick-knack'; however, the word additionally signified duplicity, since a trifle was also 'A false or idle tale, told...to deceive, cheat, or befool...a lying story, a fable, a fiction; a

Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), V.i.85.

¹⁷ John Skelton, *Magnyfycence, a Goodly Interlude and a Mery / Deuysed and Made by Mayster Skelton/ Poet Laureate Late Deceasyd* (S.l.n: J. Rastell, 1533), G.iv. From EEBO.

¹⁸ John Lydgate, *The Hystorye, Sege and Dystruccyon of Troye* (London: Richard Pynson, 1513), Y.5v. From EEBO.

jest or joke; a foolish, trivial, or nonsensical saying.¹⁹ Like trash, Katherine Parr's 'tryfles' are valueless with the potential to do harm. Equally, from at least 1526, 'rifraf' signified 'Worthless things, rubbish; odds and ends'; something 'inferior' or 'spurious'.²⁰ Katherine Parr's denunciation of the 'bishop of Rome's' 'tryfles' and 'rifraf' coalesces the meaning of these terms, more commonly used to appraise the value of mercantile goods, by using them to comment first upon the spiritual value of the religious objects and tenets of faith promoted as a spiritual necessity by the papacy and then on materiality more generally. In the crisis of value created by the Reformation, English people questioned which aspects of the old religion were worth retaining, in much the same way as they would assess the value of mercantile goods. However, unlike their marketplace dealings, it was not only the contents of their purse that were at stake, but the security of their immortal souls.

For Sir Thomas Smith and his contemporaries and successors, the literature of the commonwealth, or the vernacular shaping of England and Englishness that took place during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, is marked by its value-judgements. For those seeking to determine the shape of the English commonwealth it was necessary to define what they hoped it would be and what they wished to prevent it from becoming – what should be treasured and what must be marked as trash. The terms 'trash' and 'trifle' were contested and appropriated for a variety of polemical uses; at the core of this project is an attempt to position these words theoretically, in relation to the larger issues of religion, community, politics, perceptions of value, culture and social understanding. In order to achieve this, this thesis investigates texts (religious writing, pamphlets, political discourse, travel narrative and drama) alongside art (portraiture and illustrations) and material goods (spices, fabrics and ornaments).

Although this thesis is principally engaged in literary analysis, corpus linguistics offers a useful starting point, allowing the survey of a wide range of texts that feature the words 'trash' and 'trifle'.²¹ The Text Creation Partnership's full text

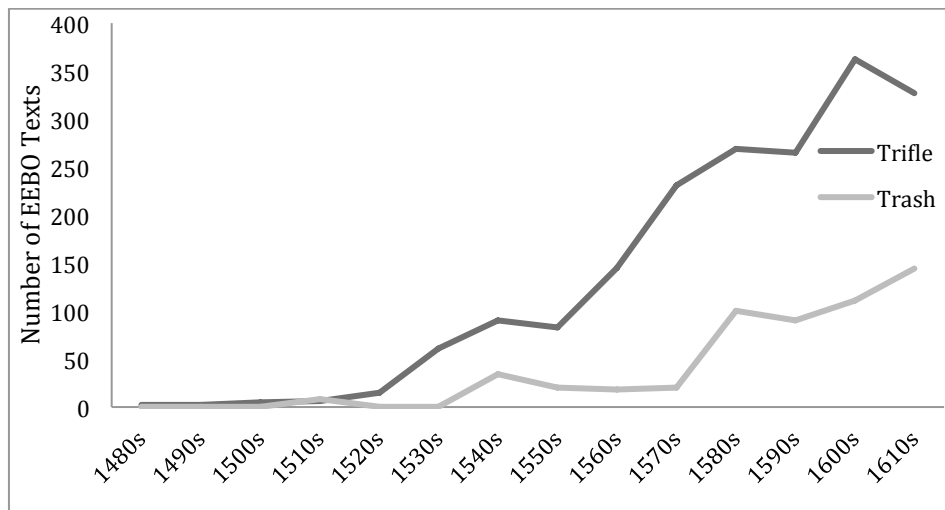
¹⁹ "trifle, n.1 and 3". *OED Online*. June 2012. (Oxford University Press) [accessed 22 July 2012]. <<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>>.

²⁰ "riff-raff | riffraff, n.2.a and b.". *OED Online*. June 2012. [accessed 22 July 2012].

²¹ Terttu Nevalainen and Elizabeth Closs Traugott explain that 'major shifts have [recently] occurred in linguistic research... This shift results in part from work on empirical data such as are provided by electronic corpora and by the study of processing and of frequency effects. It also results from dramatic increases in the availability of large electronic corpora and other digital databases'; the Text Creation Partnership's catalogue of texts on EEBO offers one such 'large

catalogue on EEBO is an appropriate data source for an initial linguistic examination in the context of this project as it is a large and indicative electronic corpus of 44,422 digitised early modern texts.²² The TCP's EEBO corpus can be searched to find texts that include variant spellings and forms of the key-words 'trash' and 'trifle'; those texts can then be electronically sorted by year to show the use of 'trash' and 'trifle' statistically during the period investigated by this thesis. Between 1473 and 1620 the word trash appears 963 times in 559 texts, while trifle appears 6459 times in 1903 texts.

A key-word search for the variant forms and spellings of 'trash' and 'trifle' within the TCP's EEBO catalogue, with an end date of 1620, shows a statistically evident rise in the number of early modern printed texts in English that feature both 'trash' and 'trifle'. The compiled results of this search, grouped by decade – as presented in Graph 1 – show that the term 'trifle' is present from an earlier date and in greater frequency in the extant texts, which can be explained by the comparatively late coinage of 'trash' as a term.

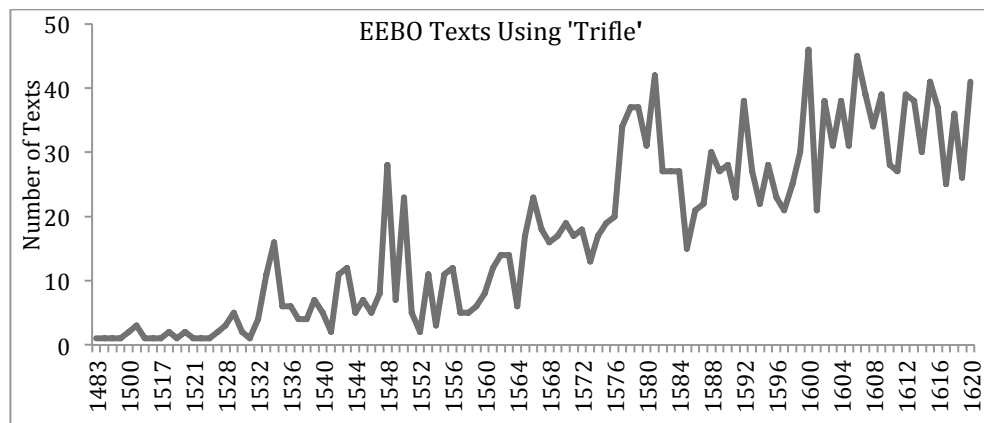


Graph 1: Comparison of TCP EEBO texts featuring the terms 'trash' and 'trifle'

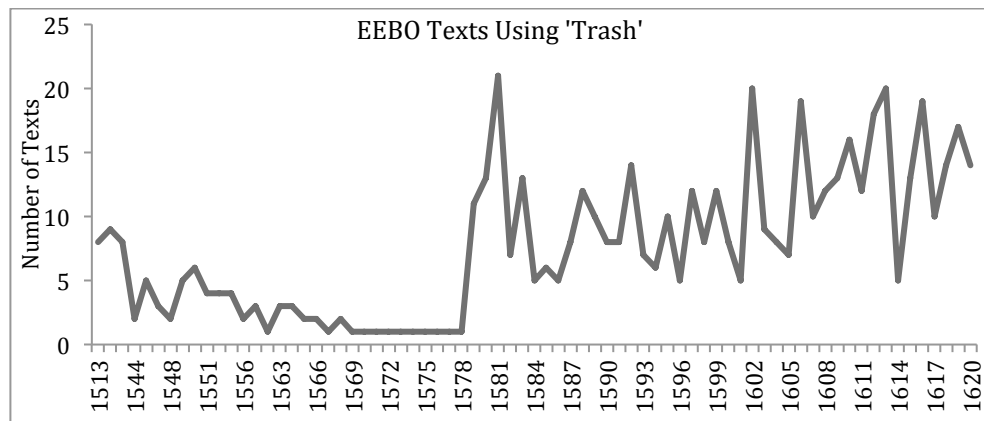
electronic corpora' or 'digital database'. [Terttu Nevalainen and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.1]

²² Using the University of Lancaster's Corpus Query Processor, which does not provide the opportunity to search for terms alongside their variant spellings and forms, to search the TCP's EEBO texts for the exact term 'trash' showed '2,796 matches in 1,789 different texts (in 1,202,214,511 words [44,422 texts]; frequency: 2.33 instances per million words)'; within those results 'trash' was present as a noun 2453 times (87.73% of total occurrences of the term 'trash'). Similarly, a search for the exact term 'trifle' 'returned 5,675 matches in 3,318 different texts (in 1,202,214,511 words [44,422 texts]; frequency: 4.72 instances per million words)'; within those results 'trifle' was present as a noun 3988 times (70.28% of total occurrences of the term 'trifle'). [<https://cqweb.lancs.ac.uk/eebov3/>]

According to the OED Online edition, the etymology of 'trifle' can be traced back to earlier Middle English, Old French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese word forms; conversely, the term 'trash' is described as being 'known only from 16th cent.; origin obscure.'²³ Further to this, a more tightly focused statistical analysis, where the results are grouped by year rather than decade – as shown in Graphs 2 and 3 – indicates a similar upward trend in the number of texts containing the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' to that shown in the first graph. However, grouping the results by year also indicates specific peaks within that upward trend that can be used to pinpoint the times when these terms appeared in print as well as the crises in value they are linked to.



Graph 2: TCP EEBO texts featuring the term 'trifle' grouped by year



Graph 3: TCP EEBO texts featuring the term 'trash' grouped by year

Despite the longer time span (the noun 'trifle' being an earlier coinage than 'trash') and smoother upward trend that is evident in Graph 2, the peaks of both Graphs 2 and 3 can be associated with periods of anxiety over valuation in early modern England. The religious upheaval of the Reformation, the Dissolution of the

²³ "trifle, n." *OED Online*. September 2014. Web; "trash, n.1." *OED Online*. September 2014. [accessed 22 July 2012].

Monasteries (1536-1541) and subsequent spiritual conflicts correlates with an upsurge in the printed use of 'trash' (1540, 1583 and 1588) and 'trifle' (1534, 1548, 1592 and 1606). However, these early peaks, in 1540 and 1534 respectively, also connect to the crisis of mercantile value created by the 'great debasement' of England's coinage that saw the base value of the coinage drop to unprecedented levels, since debasement began as an experiment in Ireland as early as 1536 and became 'full-scale' in 1544.²⁴ Thus, the earliest large-scale deployments of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle', which fuse the mercantile with the spiritual to respond to perceived crises in value, occurred in decades where anxieties over spiritual treasure was matched by fears over mercantile stability.

Later, the effect of the shifting understanding of the stability of material value caused by the early trading encounters with the native inhabitants of the New and Old Worlds Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the globe (1581) and the Anglo-Ottoman trading capitulations (1580/1) is equally evident in the peaks that occur in Graphs 2 and 3 in 1581. Similarly, both graphs show a data spike in 1592, which connects to the perceived mercantile threat of alleged mass immigration that resulted in the anonymous posting of the vehemently anti-immigrant Dutch Church Libel pamphlet the following year (1593). Further peaks occur in the years surrounding first performance of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which features Joan Trash – 1612 and 1615 in Graph 2 and in 1613 in Graph 3. The anomalous statistical results for the terms 'trifle' and 'trash' correlate with moments of anxiety over spiritual and mercantile valuation, national security, immigration and cultural worth.

As will be explained in subsequent chapters, this thesis explores selected texts from the clusters that appeared during these moments of value crisis. At the start of this introduction Queen Katherine Parr's *Lamentation of a Synner* was considered in conjunction with the portrait she commissioned of herself; similarly, the rest of this thesis will feature an interdisciplinary engagement with the images, texts and artefacts that appear in clusters at the moments of anxiety that generated the high peaks and deep troughs in the above graphs.

²⁴ Christopher Edgar Challis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), p.82; 84.

While the above graphs are clearly suggestive of literary trends responding to various value crises it must be acknowledged that a linguistic analysis of any early modern corpus, including the TCP's EBO catalogue, has a restricted capacity to offer a complete or absolute understanding of the linguistic development of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle'. Although there is an evident upsurge in the number of texts within the TCP's EBO database that contain 'trash' and 'trifle', it is necessary to qualify the weight of these results, which only contain the extant texts that are available to EBO and have been digitised by the TCP. It is also possible that other relevant texts either no longer exist or have been omitted from this database. Additionally, it is only possible to search for the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' separately, which leads to texts which contain both terms – such as the 'triflyng trashe' described in Thomas Newton's 1581 translation of Martin Luther's *Commentarie or Exposition Vppon the Twoo Epistles Generall of Sainct Peter, and that of Sainct Jude* – being duplicated in both searches.²⁵ Also, more than one edition of texts containing these terms are present on the database and within the search results – both the 1588 and 1590 editions of Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report of the new found land of Virginia* appear in the search results. However, despite the potential for anomaly or incompleteness in the results generated by this linguistic investigation of 'trash' and 'trifle' within the TCP's EBO database, the corpus is large enough for the results of a key-word search within it to be statistically significant.

When coupled with the literary analysis that is the focus of this thesis, the results of this linguistic examination of the TCP's EBO catalogue and the literary analysis will show that the upsurge in 'trash talk' in England during the sixteenth century materialised around divergent anxieties – both spiritual and financial – which individually and/ or collectively generated a crisis in value. The first financial crisis – the 'great debasement' – caused the English coin to be trashed into worthlessness; something intrinsic to England had become trash. Five years after the advent of the 'full-scale debasement', Sir Thomas Smith wrote that his

²⁵ Martin Luther, *A Commentarie or Exposition Vppon the Twoo Epistles Generall of Sainct Peter, and that of Sainct Jude. First Faithfullie Gathered out of the Lectures and Preachings of That Worthie Instrumente in Goddes Church, Doctour Martine Luther. And Now out of Latine, for the Singuler Benefite and Comfort of the Godlie, Familiarlie Translated into Englishe by Thomas Newton* (Imprinted at London: [By John Kingston] for Abraham Veale dwellyng in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the La[m]be, 1581), Mm.ii^v. From EBO.

manuscript *Discourse* was concerned with ‘what thinges men are most grieved with’ and ‘how such grieves may bee taken away, and the state of the Common weale reformed agayne.’²⁶ According to the *Discourse* the ‘most grief’ to the ‘Commonweal’ was the ‘dearth’ or inflation that was being experienced, which Smith’s text claims was caused by this debasement that continued on until 1551, when the Elizabethan government began the process of Recoinage.²⁷ Investigating the unrest created by the value crises of the ‘great debasement’ introduces a sixteenth century landscape of value anxiety, and provides a foundation for understanding subsequent crises.

A Crisis in Value

In my opening quotations Katherine Parr denounced the religious objects and principles of the papacy, using language that was equally appropriate for describing economic worthlessness. This conflation of the religious and the economic suggests that the debate over spiritual valuation was preceded and its expression influenced by a crisis in economic value: the ‘great debasement’, which was not only a crisis in economic terms but also a crisis in confidence. The secrecy with which the debased coin was both created and dispersed into the marketplace caused distrust of the English coin at home and abroad, which led to a different kind of crisis of faith over whether any English coin held its face value.

The character of the Marchaunt in Smith’s *Discourse* enunciates how these crises, resulting from debasement, were experienced in early modern England:

Then I perceauē euery man findeth himselfe greeued at this time, & no man goeth cleare as farre as I can perceauē. The Gentleman that he cannot lyue on his Landes onely as his father did before: the Artificers cannot set so many a worke by reason all maner of victayle is so deere: the Husbandman by reason his Lande is deerer rented then before: then we that be Marchaunts pay much deerer for euery thing that commeth ouer sea: which great derth (I speake in comparison of former times) hath ben alwayes in a maner at a stay

²⁶ Sir Thomas Smith, ‘Manuscript *Discourse of the Commonweal of England*’, British Library Add 48047 (Yelverton MS. 52) ff. 170-226b

²⁷ John Dennis Gould, *The Great Debasement: Currency and the Economy in Mid-Tudor England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p.2.

euier after that basenesse of our Englishe Coyne, which happened in the later yeares of Kyng *Henry* the eyght.²⁸

The debasement of England's coin is shown to have caused damage to the economic lives of people across the social classes, from the Gentleman who owns the land to the Husbandman that rents that land for his work. As well as highlighting the ubiquity of the damaging effects throughout the English community Smith's assiduous demarcation of class also reads as an attempt to maintain that hierarchy's rigidity at a time when crises in value (such as debasement, foreign trade and social mobility) threatened to collapse class divides. Equally, debasement led to the crisis of confidence in the true value of English coin overseas, which the Marchaunt describes as being the root cause of the inflated prices that he and his fellows have experienced when purchasing commodities abroad.

The study of the 'great debasement' in which Smith's *Discourse* was so engaged is an extensive critical field. This thesis, however, seeks to offer a new perspective. In 1931 Charles Oman's *The Coinage of England* offered a temporally comprehensive study of coins in England that, due to the large time span, focused only briefly on Henry VIII's 'great debasement'. Oman states that Henry VIII 'had taken over from his father the finest, the best executed, and the most handsome coinage in Europe. He left to his son the most disreputable looking money that had been seen since the days of Stephen – the gold heavily alloyed, the so-called silver ill-struck and turning black or brown as the base metal came to the surface.'²⁹ Unlike Oman, J. D. Gould and C. E Challis, in 1970 and 1978 respectively, focused their attention upon coinage within early modern England alone. Gould's *The Great Debasement* explores the economic and historical impact of the debasement upon England's position in overseas trading by assessing the 'changes in the volume of exports during the debasement period... in the light of a survey of their trends in the pre-debasement period.'³⁰ In contrast, Challis, in *The Tudor Coinage*, avoids investigating how the use of money in Tudor England was affected by debasement; instead, in a manner similar to the materiality of Oman's study, Challis provides an

²⁸ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, C.3^r.

²⁹ Charles Oman, *The Coinage of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p.244.

³⁰ Gould, *The Great Debasement*, p.4.

investigation of 'what the circulating medium was actually like' through exploring the history of England's mints.³¹

More recently, Nicholas Mayhew's *Sterling* has presented an exploration of the history of England's currency, which like Oman's spans the centuries.³² Mayhew asserts that 'sterling runs through British history', contributing 'to that elusive but significant concept, the national identity.'³³ Mayhew also highlights the connection between currency and monarchy – sterling was part of the national identity, the monarch was head of the nation and therefore in control of the currency. The coin, marked with the monarch's image, acted as a material representation of that monarch among the people; Mayhew explains that 'from at least the eleventh century even the lowest peasants used coin, and measured their assets and obligations in money terms.'³⁴

The coin functioned both as part of the national identity and as a material surrogate for the physical presence of the monarch. The coinage thus stood as an emblem for England, both at home, among the citizens, and abroad, among merchants and moneychangers. Through the 'great debasement' that emblem became visibly tarnished, trashed and therefore perceived as worthless, as the precious metals were worn away to show the base copper beneath. The debased coinage tarnished the perception of the national identity (at home and abroad) and the monarch; the trash (base metals) of the coinage was literally trashing (destructive). Mayhew describes the 'great debasement' as 'the single greatest fraud carried out by any English government on its own people...[and a] trauma [that] scarred the collective memory for generations to come.'³⁵ He finds, in this 'trauma', the germ of the distrust that infected other marketplace commodities since the continuance of high retail prices 'may have been a result of a flight from generally distrusted money into goods.'³⁶ Through this, Mayhew hints at the complex psychological relationships that were present between the subjects (people spending) and objects (coins) at the heart of the English economy.

³¹ Challis, *Tudor Coinage*, p.xi.

³² Nicholas J. Mayhew, *Sterling: The History of a Currency* (London: Penguin, 2000), p.1.

³³ Ibid., pp.xi-xii.

³⁴ Ibid., p.xvi.

³⁵ Ibid., p.47.

³⁶ Ibid., p.50.

Oman, Gould, Challis and Mayhew concern themselves with the material history of England's currency, focusing variously on the organisation of the mints, the physical form the coinage took, how the coinage functioned within England and in foreign markets abroad, and the effect of the 'great debasement' in these contexts. These economic material histories depict the 'great debasement' as having had a profound effect upon both the appearance of the coinage and the economic state of England; this thesis seeks to expand upon this by exploring how the 'great debasement' and subsequent crises of value were conceptualised and articulated in the literature of early modern England.

Another significant crisis of value, with a commencement contemporary to the 'great debasement', was a theological one, rooted in the Reformation and the split from Rome. The Reformation spurred a crisis in spiritual valuation and it is this crisis that Parr responds to in the *Lamentation*. She announces that the articles of religion that had been sold to her as valuable, necessary for the preservation of her soul, had been revealed as 'tryfles' and 'rifraf'. The language of the marketplace functioned as a useful lingua franca to communicate value in the debates that followed this crisis.

The removal of Rome's authority led to the formation of opposing domestic factions, each hoping to ensure that England's separate religious identity could be shaped to their own design. The freedom to shape England's national Church anew understandably stimulated debate about what was spiritual treasure and what was papal trash. The differing religious factions at Henry's court and on his council, combined with Henry's own apparent unwillingness to finalise a religious settlement in either direction, ensured that these debates over religious value continued to rage throughout his reign. Similarly, throughout the reigns of his three children England swerved between strident reforms and violent Catholic counter-reforms, before Elizabeth acceded to the throne and returned to her father's policy of equivocation, all of which ensured that religious trash and treasure continued to be a source of profound conflict throughout the rest of the century.

Those reformist writers, both before and after Parr, who sought to distinguish papal trash and trifles from spiritual treasure directed their contempt at multiple, frequently divergent, targets. Papal trash was associated variously with

pilgrimages, the purchasing of indulgences and pardons, masses for the dead, relics, confession, the sacrament, the host, priests' vestments, ecclesiastical hierarchy, rosary beads, holy oil, marriage, incense, songs, prayers, ceremonies and the use of Latin. For conservative reformers, who wished to retain the practices of Rome without the connection to the papacy, these were 'works' that were vital aspects for faith; however, more radical reformers viewed some of these aspects as unnecessary and possibly damaging 'works' that obscured true faith.

In *Idols of the Marketplace*, David Hawkes explores the intersection between religion and economics in the concern over 'idolatry' that was being voiced by Protestant English people from the late sixteenth until the late seventeenth centuries.³⁷ He finds that the early modern use of the word 'idolatry' demonstrates that 'the people of Reformation England recognized an analogous, or rather an homologous, violation of natural teleology in the growing influence of the market economy.'³⁸ Hawkes directly connects the growth of capitalism, and the 'commodity fetishism' that went alongside it, with the early modern understanding of religion and the sin of 'idolatry'.³⁹ Certainly, Katherine Parr's *Lamentation* is peppered with admissions that she had once been guilty of idolatry; she asserts that she not only 'made a great ydol of [her] self' but also that she had 'esteemed...ydolles' before, with Henry's guidance, she was brought to renounce papal trash. She also specifies that these 'ydolles' were 'made of mennes handes', which deliberately marks them out as manufactured goods more akin to worthless marketplace commodities than necessary goods imbued with holy essence. In early modern England capitalism was not appraised in a purely economic language; instead, Hawkes asserts that capitalism was also discussed and critiqued 'in the vocabulary of religion, which is to say also in terms of ethics, aesthetics, and hermeneutics, [and] means only that we must rethink our understanding of the relation between these "spheres" in the early modern period.'⁴⁰ Equally, theological matters were being discussed and critiqued through the established vocabulary of the marketplace; as pointed out earlier, Katherine Parr's 'ydolles' were disparaged as 'tryfles' and 'rifraf'.

³⁷ David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.5.

³⁸ Ibid., p.6.

³⁹ Ibid., pp.7-8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.17.

Economic issues, therefore, were indivisible from ‘the cultural, aesthetic, or ethical aspects of life.’⁴¹ The economic concerns of the international marketplace were frequently understood and verbalised using language that is more obviously recognisable as belonging to religious discourse. This thesis will show that it is just as important to recognise that these linguistic terms were also shared in the *opposite* direction; during and after the Reformation the moral principals of religion were discussed in economic terms as early modern England strove to separate what was spiritually valuable treasure and what was papal trash and trifles, in order to shape England and its Church. While ‘idolatry’ was originally a religious value-judgement that was co-opted into the debates over the capitalist marketplace, the word trash had no similar attachments. This enabled it to proliferate throughout parallel debates that emerged during periods of value crises. Trash and trifles, alongside the other words in their semantic range, formed a lexicon that was at once religious, political, economic, social and ethical.

Alongside these continued debates over spiritual value, the mid and later sixteenth century also saw the semantic range of trash and trifles being used in relation to England’s developing position in the global trading marketplace. While early modern England was in the process of negotiating its reformed religious identity, separate from orthodox Europe and papal obedience, this was also the period – according to Robert Brenner – ‘in which the English economy was, for the first time, beginning to distinguish itself from those of its Continental neighbours.’⁴² The early modern English discourse of ‘trash’ and ‘trifles’ was nationally focused and utilised to exclude ‘strangers’, since foreign goods and immigrants were seen, by some, to be flooding into England to the detriment of the commonwealth. Critics saw those foreign goods being brought into England while English goods, of greater value, were being exported in their place; because of this their presence in England destabilised the economic balance of the commonwealth. Equally, the immigrants residing in England, with the consent of the English government (either because their specialist skills were felt to be lacking in England or as religious refugees fleeing Catholic persecution in Europe) were accused of unbalancing England’s population and economy. In *The Economy*

⁴¹ Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace*, p.20.

⁴² Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London’s Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (London: Verso, 2003), p.40.

of *Obligation* Craig Muldrew explains that, '(f)rom the late sixteenth century, England was a very active market culture in which profit, price and bargains were a constant concern for most households on a weekly, if not daily, basis. There was a great amount of buying and selling, involving almost all adult members of society.'⁴³ When the 'native' English found themselves anxious about increasing unemployment, hunger and homelessness, the blame often landed upon the immigrants.

These parallel anxieties, where religious conflict in Europe saw refugees arrive in England who, in turn, were associated with and blamed for bringing in mercantile trash, are given full voice in the 'Dutch Church Libel' (1593). The libel conflates the foreign 'strangers' with the 'Machiavellian Marchant [that] spoyles the state' and describes them as being 'like the Jewes' who 'eate [the English] vp as bread' and who can be found 'in...temples praying', which connects with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (c.1589-90).⁴⁴ The libeller then references Marlowe's play of the following year, *The Massacre at Paris* (1593), stating: 'Not paris massacre so much blood did spill'.⁴⁵ It is also stated that their presence and work in England has meant that 'Our pore artificers doe starve & dye/ For y^t they cannot now be sett on worke' and, because of the immigrants' willingness to live 'twenty in one house', the Libel also claims that rents have been raised '[a]nd our pore soules, are cleane thrust out of dore'.⁴⁶ The libeller conflates the anxiety over the value of mercantile goods with concerns over the presence of non-native and religiously divergent communities in England, using words in the vernacular range of trash and trifles. These concerns place it firmly within the legacy of the 'great debasement'. The shared terminologies employed to discuss both value and faith are evidence for the existence of a complex process of cross-fertilisation between mercantilism and religion in this pivotal period.

⁴³ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.59.

⁴⁴ 'A Libel', Lines 5-39; David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber, 2004), p.318.

⁴⁵ 'A Libel', Line 40.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Lines 25-31.

Legacies

Since the turn of the twenty-first century at least fifty books and over one thousand articles concerning 'trash' have been published in the United Kingdom. Evidently, the value debates and anxiety surrounding the presence of trash within the early modern English commonwealth have evolved and continue to be a focus for concern and discussion. Like the lists of spiritual and mercantile trash and trifles that to be examined within this thesis, in *An Ontology of Trash* (2007), Greg Kennedy uses listing to draw attention to the proliferating presence of trash in the twenty-first century:

Plastic bags, newspapers, pizza boxes, razors, coffee-filters, napkins, quartz watches, elastic bands, diapers, toothbrushes, j-cloths, mail-order catalogues, aluminum cans, ball-point pens, sticky-notes, hospital gowns, cosmetic compacts, cameras, holiday decorations, ink cartridges, running shoes, juice-boxes, boil-in-the-bag rice, lighters, rubber gloves, bottled water, missiles, glue-sticks, cutlery; two-year-old computers, cat litter, surgical instruments, drinking straws, plastic children's toys, cell phones, batteries, hairspray dispensers, Kleenex, lightbulbs...⁴⁷

Kennedy's list is comparable to the list of spiritually worthless papal 'trysetrase' presented in the English translation of Antoine de Marcourt's *Booke of Marchantes* of 1547 (discussed further in Chapter 1), which the corrupt agents of Rome used to 'meruelously well drawe money to them.'⁴⁸ This list can also be connected to the inventory of mercantile 'trifles' (namely the: 'drynking and looking glasses, paynted clothes, perfumed gloues, daggers, kniues, pinnes, pointes, aglets buttons, and a thousande other thinges of like sort.'⁴⁹) that the Doctor in Sir Thomas Smith's *Discourse* (explored in Chapter 2) presents as unnecessary importations. Similarly, it resembles of the list of low-value English toys and trifles that Thomas Harriot describes as being (erroneously) valued by the naive population of the New World (considered in Chapter 3).

⁴⁷ Greg Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash: The Disposable and Its Problematic Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), p.xi.

⁴⁸ Antoine de Marcourt, *The Booke of Marchauntes Very Profitable to All Folkes to Knowe of What Wares They Ought to Be Ware of, for the Begilyng of Them. Newly Perused and Augmented by the First Authoure Well Practised in Suche Doynges. Reade and Profite* ([Imprinted in Lo[n]don: [[By J. Day?] and] are to be sold by Richard Iugge, at the North doore of Pouls. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum], Anno. 1547), Bi^v. From EEBO.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Discourse of the Common Weale*, M4^r.

There is, therefore, an evident connection and equivalence between Kennedy's list of twenty-first century trash refuse and early modern 'trysetrase'. In each of these uses of listing, the author seeks to assert the material valuelessness of the collections of objects they present; the process of listing bleaches away the value and distinctiveness of the objects that it groups together. However, in the sixteenth century examples, the valuelessness of the items that these lists contain is intrinsically present: they are worthless trifles at the moment of manufacture and the point of purchase, which means that they are trash prior to being consumed. Conversely, when Kennedy refers to trash he is deploying the term as it is specifically used in the United States in order to describe 'domestic refuse, garbage'; he means 'rubbish' rather than 'trash' (as it was understood in early modern England).⁵⁰

There is a small but crucial difference between the valueless trash and trifles of early modern England and the twenty-first century connection between trash and waste. As Kennedy explains, 'in earlier times, things were usually worn out before they were thrown out.'⁵¹ The list of 'trash' in the *Ontology* has been made valueless through consumption; even 'plastic bags' and 'pizza boxes' are manufactured for their value to effectively transport other manufactured commodities. They become 'trash' after they have been consumed. These objects have been manufactured, marketed and purchased within a consumer culture that acknowledges their market value but questions (with varying degrees of anxiety) the destructive and devaluing potential that their disposability creates.

Kennedy's twenty-first century understanding of trash identifies a connection between anxiety and the sheer volume of waste, rather than its valuelessness. While the disposability of the objects in this listed trash-heap does imply a waste of money at the moment of purchase, the more pressing concern is the waste of resources. Manufacturing these objects necessitates the use of fuels or chemicals that create environmentally damaging by-products, transporting them to the point of purchase is reliant upon a depleted global oil reserve, while their consumption creates refuse – packaging, like 'plastic bags' and 'pizza boxes', is discarded or the objects themselves become obsolete through use and changing fashions – and that

⁵⁰ "trash, n.1(b)". *OED Online*. December 2011. Oxford University Press [accessed 25 February 2012].

⁵¹ Kennedy, *Ontology of Trash*, p.xv.

refuse is seen as an environmental blight. Yet Kennedy does echo the anxiety and conflict found in early modern English debates and polemics that deployed the terms trash and trifles to respond to the value crises of their period – in a desire for control over the material world.

Although the line of argument presented within the *Ontology of Trash* can be placed at the end of a discursive continuum that includes, if not commences with, the debates of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that forms the focus of this thesis, Kennedy asserts that:

if waste is an urban blight, then trash is a special invention of the modern megapolis. The phenomenon of trash first appears in a thoroughly urbanized world, where cities geographically contain the majority of the population and greatly influence the minority still residing outside their precincts...Trash is the unique associate, the metaphysical sidekick, as it were, of the urbanized humanity of late modernity.⁵²

To accept this assertion is to deny the rich and complicated history of the shaping of the conception of trash, trifles and waste that, as this thesis will show, are a key presence within the value debates of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. To do so also denies the evidence presented by Hazel Forsyth in *Toys, Trifles & Trinkets: Base-Metal Miniatures from London 1200 to 1800*, which catalogues items from this period found on the Thames foreshore. She asserts that:

Accidental loss hardly accounts for the range and variety of miniatures found on the foreshore... and the most likely explanation of their presence in this area is that they were gathered up in the rubbish collected from households around the City. For much of the period covered by this book, the waterfront was used by Londoners as a convenient refuse tip.⁵³

Forsyth's study provides material examples that disprove Kennedy's assertions; the disposal of trash as waste was a factor of early modern English life, albeit in lower volumes, and not simply the product of late modernity.

At the end of his manifesto on twenty-first century trash Kennedy argues for a change in the collective public response to the disposable commodities that become wasteful trash through consumption. Sir Thomas Smith had similarly presented the value for the English 'common weale' of a protectionist trading policy, which would reassert proper value without isolating England from the

⁵² Kennedy, *Ontology of Trash*, p.92.

⁵³ Hazel Forsyth with Geoff Egan, *Toys, Trifles & Trinkets: Base-metal Miniatures from London 1200 to 1800* (London: Unicorn, 2005), p.25.

benefits of strong international trading links. In a strikingly similar fashion, Kennedy's solution is one of 'simplification' and 'temperance' with regard to mercantile consumption, rather than total cessation; he does not advocate the end of consumption in order to prevent the creation of waste and trash but rather a reconsideration of value.⁵⁴ Smith's division of trifles into the categories of 'necessary' (value-adding) and 'unnecessary' (economically damaging) have been reshaped for the twenty-first century – the disposability of certain 'ludicrous and superfluous' commodities creates trash, which makes those objects unnecessary, while longevity reasserts 'value' and renders objects necessary.⁵⁵

This study relies upon the connected but disparate topics of value, credit and waste in order to explore the understanding and representation of 'trash' and 'trifles' in early modern literature and culture. The value crises discussed in this thesis span economic, religious and political issues, which makes it appropriate to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating social anthropology and economic history alongside literary analysis. Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* provides an investigative starting point and anthropological insight into rituals surrounding purity, 'dirt' and 'contagion', which can be linked to early modern perceptions of 'trash' and 'trifles'. Although Douglas does not refer to trash or trifles specifically, her presentation of 'dirt' is useful because the communal process of abjection that she describes in relation to 'dirt' can be shown to intersect variously with the early modern English relationship with and understanding of the concept of trash and trifles. Her assertion that: 'we shall not expect to understand other people's ideas of contagion, sacred or secular, until we have confronted our own' is useful for the investigation of trash and trifles.⁵⁶ Both 'dirt', as described by Douglas, and the early modern trash and trifles of this thesis have implicit connotations of 'contagion'.

Douglas explains that 'dirt' refers to the diverse elements that a given community experienced as 'disorder' or rather 'as matter out of place.'⁵⁷ When something is described as 'dirt' it occurs in response to the confusion that is caused when an object or objects are found where they shouldn't be. Trash and trifles

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Ontology of Trash*, p.187.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.35.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.2; 44.

similarly refer to 'matter out of place' since they are employed to assert that something should not be accorded value. Their use also signals the presence of 'disorder' and conflict caused by misplaced value. Trash and trifles are also enlisted to contradict the attribution of value, when someone has ascribed value to something that someone else deems to be valueless. When an individual deploys the terms trash and trifles it is evidence of the presence of 'disorder' in a community; 'matter [is] out of place' because, in deploying these terms, a writer signals that something is unjustly valued.

However, while 'dirt' is shown by Douglas to be cohesively understood across an individual community as something to be ritually avoided or expelled, in opposition to cleanliness or holy purity, to designate something as valueless trash or trifles acts divisively within the community. Nevertheless, at the same time, deploying those terms is also evidence of an attempt to create order by enforcing a specific set of values upon a community. For example, the 'gawds' mentioned in the Dutch Church Libel (discussed in Chapter Two) are being used as a harrying cry for violence against the immigrants living within the English community. Rather than simply unifying behaviour and understanding across a community, trash and trifles can be a symbolic cause of contestation. Just as 'dirt' is the opposite of 'cleanliness', trash and trifles are opposed to treasure; more specifically, trash and trifles are that which some deem as treasure and to which others deny value.

Unlike 'dirt', trash and trifles appear to be constantly mutating. As a result, we need to see these terms relationally. For example, the effect that class difference, embodied in the sumptuary laws, had on the demarcation of things categorised as trash and trifles in early modern England is profound. Patricia Fumerton's *Cultural Aesthetics* explores what she describes as: 'the trivial selfhood of the aristocracy in the English Renaissance...that was supported and, indeed, constituted by bric-a-brac worlds of decorations, gifts, foodstuffs, small entertainments, and other particles of cultural wealth and show.'⁵⁸ Fumerton's work shows how the ornamentation of Katherine Parr's body in the opening portrait not only announces her status as queen, but also fashions her aristocratic individuality or regal 'selfhood'. Nobility can therefore be read as being accretive; it is not

⁵⁸ Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.1.

something that simply exists at birth, but rather it is something that requires continuous building up through layers of otherwise ‘trivial’ objects – trash and trifles – being placed upon the aristocratic body.

By using ‘trivial’, Fumerton is referring to ‘an analytic of the fragmentary, peripheral, and ornamental’, which indicates that the objects referred to as ‘trivial’ are marked as ‘unnecessary’; this ‘unnecessary’ quality was among the primary reasons for categorising something as trash or trifle in early modern England.⁵⁹ Certainly, necessity was used to differentiate the valuable from the valueless and the word features heavily in Sir Thomas Smith’s *Discourse*, for example, in the list of ‘Instruments necessary’ for a Gentleman (discussed earlier).⁶⁰ Such differentiation is also evident in the decision to give an inventory of 1559 the polemic title – ‘The Particular value of certain necessary and unnecessary Wares brought into the Port of London in the second year of the Queen Majesty’s reign, the overquantity whereof most lamentably spoileth the realm yearly.’⁶¹

Fumerton is quick to assert that she rejects the ‘derogatory connotation’ of the word ‘trivial’, since the ‘gifts, chivalric romances, miniatures, sonnets, banqueting-house desserts (with their confectionary plates), court masques, and the trade exotica of the East Indies’ that have been historically rendered as “‘mere’ ornaments’ also offer an opportunity to ‘watch the fictional making of the aristocratic self.’⁶² As the portrait of Queen Katherine Parr proves, the silks and carpets that were ‘trade exotica’ were vital tools for the public display and projection of a person’s noble status. Just as ‘trivial’ goods functioned to create aristocratic ‘selfhood’, nobility also transforms the valuelessness of those goods into necessity – trash and trifles become treasure through the nobility of the owner. Luxury items, such as wines, spices, silks and glass are necessary ‘trivialities’ to ensure the nobility maintain their social standing, while armour and weapons are the requisite tools for the expression of a nobleman’s martial responsibility to the country. Without his nobility those goods would be rendered unnecessary trifles or trash.

⁵⁹ Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics*, p.1.

⁶⁰ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D.4r.

⁶¹ Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), Appendix 1, pp.182-185.

⁶² Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics*, pp.2-3.

That nobility was lacking in the case of theatrical playing companies, as the props and costumes worn to represent monarchs and aristocrats could not be transformed by the low born actors wearing them and so remained trivial, trifling, trash on display before a paying audience. The anti-theatrical movement often decried players and their plays for being and staging trash or trifles.⁶³ The theatres were also accused of damaging the spiritual health of the commonwealth, both through their potential to stage transgressive material in their plays and through their capacity to draw people away from spiritual concerns. Philip Stubbes complained, in 1583, that the theatres were a source of material infection within the souls of the commonwealth as the false, gaudy costumes and transgressive content of the plays led people to disregard the preservation of their souls and instead they went ‘flocking and running to Theaters & curtens, daylie and hourelly, night and daye, tyme and tyde to see Playes and Enterludes’.⁶⁴ Theatrical trash had the capacity to infect its audience, the wider community and the English commonwealth as a whole – it was considered by many clergy and associated moralists to be destructive and devaluing.

However, the theatre was uniquely placed not only to respond to detractors but also to take part in the conflict over trash and trifles by staging and redefining the terminology. The theatre was by necessity work in imitation; as actors, non-gentry men had to play, and therefore be costumed as though they were monarchy, nobility or women. Through this the players necessarily subverted the sumptuary laws, through the use of clothing and props that were either borrowed or the gift of a company’s noble patron. In some circumstances they would have been the products of a process of ‘spangling’ (using glass beads to replicate precious gems) and gilding (in place of gold). On occasion stage props were even made of paper.

⁶³ In *The Anatomie of Abuses* Philip Stubbes complains that the theatres blur the boundaries of value and social hierarchy by staging: ‘the excesse of Apparell, my meaning is of the inferiour sorte onely, who for the most parte do farre surpasse, either noble, honorable, or worshipfull, ruffling in Silks, Ueluets, Satens, Damasks, Taffeties, Gold, Siluer, and what not? with their swards, daggers, and rapiers guilte, and reguilte, burnished, and costly ingrauen, with all things els, that any noble, honorable, or worshipfull Man doth, or may weare, so as the one cannot easily be discerned from the other.’ [Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses Contayning a Discouerie, or Briefe Summarie of Such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as Now Raigne in Many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde: But (especiallie) in a Verie Famous Ilande Called Ailgna: Together, with Most Fearefull Examples of Gods Iudgementes, Executed Vpon the Wicked for the Same, Aswell in Ailgna of Late, as in Other Places, Elsewhere. Verie Godly, to Be Read of All True Christians, Euerie Where: But Most Needefull, to Be Regarded in Englande. Made Dialogue-wise, by Phillip Stubbes. Seene and Allowed, According to Order* (Printed at London: By [John Kingston for] Richard Iones, 1. Maij. 1583), q.7^v. From EEBO.

⁶⁴ Ibid., L.8^r.

Kings and queens were staged with paper crowns and glass diamonds, as the techniques of the theatre aped fine manufacture and quality wares – in this way theatres literally staged trash commodities. By combining the material cast-offs of the nobility with items produced cheaply in-house with the sole purpose of aping nobility, the theatres devalued noble objects which, as a consequence, might challenge the value or status of the nobility itself.

At the end of the sixteenth and the start of the seventeenth century the legacy of the religious and economic anxieties that had been a feature of English discourse throughout the previous century were played out on the English stage. Playwrights used the stage to discuss trash and confront accusations that the stage was a site for purveying trash and trifles; instead they sought to deflect the same accusation onto the uncontrolled bodies of women in the marketplace in order to assert the valuable masculine authority of their theatrical labours. More recently, Natasha Korda's *Labors Lost* has examined the role played by 'the labor, wares, ingenuity, and capital of women of all stripes' in 'the rise of the professional stage'.⁶⁵ She argues that, because of the 'momentous historical upheavals' in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England, there was 'an expanding informal economy of female creditors, moneylenders, pawnbrokers, frippers, victuallers, alewives, street hawkers, [and] textile workers'.⁶⁶ Each of these marketplace professions practised by women would have been undertaken in the theatre and its environs. Korda explains that early modern male playwrights engaged in a process aimed at 'stigmatizing...the wares of market women through the staged destruction of their purportedly false, insubstantial, or adulterated products.'⁶⁷

Lady Lucar, in Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (first performed in 1581, published in 1584), is placed at the centre of a trifle smuggling circle working to corrupt the marketplace and damage the English commonwealth. In William Shakespeare's *Othello* (c.1603-4) the uncontrolled sexuality of the courtesan Bianca enables Iago to name her as 'this trash' (V.i.85). Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) boasts the character of a gingerbread saleswoman called Joan Trash. The uncontrolled physical presence of these women in the marketplace – as

⁶⁵ Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12.

traders, in the case of Lady Lucar and Joan Trash or, as in the case of Bianca as a sexual commodity – is shown in the plays of the period to be dangerous to the commonwealth. These women, particularly Joan Trash, are presented as being synonymous with the devaluing trash and trifles they spread.

The final section of Korda's book expands upon these ideas, using the example of Joan Trash and the staged destruction of her gingerbread wares, by Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in act three, scene six of *Bartholomew Fair*.⁶⁸ While the destruction of Joan's gingerbread certainly illustrates a theatrical attempt to legitimise the profession of playing by destroying those '[g]oods manufactured outside the masculine fellowship guilds', this thesis will show that the abjection or stigmatisation of female wares occurs long before their destruction in that play.⁶⁹ Indeed, at the moment of her first entrance upon the stage, Leatherhead accuses Joan Trash of selling gingerbread made of 'stale bread, rotten eggs, musty/ ginger, and dead honey', which references 'unsound food – musty and unwholesome corn, unsound cattle, tainted fish and mussels – [the sale of which] was forbidden during the plague.'⁷⁰ Women's wares not only threatened the sanctity and monopoly of the Guilds, the group from whom men working in the theatres sought acceptance, but also the physical health of everyone within the marketplace, which makes their destruction doubly justified. In this example, women's wares are presented as worthless and infectious; they are devaluing trash and trifles that jeopardise the whole commonwealth. The playwrights thus set themselves up as protectors of the commonwealth against the threat of effeminate trash and trifles. There is, however, evident hypocrisy in this stance since the low-value women's wares that their plays rail against are, as Korda has shown, items that their craft was heavily dependant upon as it developed. The language used to describe these women and to enunciate the value anxiety they generated only added to the semantic range of trash and trifles. It is for this reason that this thesis culminates with an investigation of women's trash and trifles on the early modern English stage.

⁶⁸ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.201.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.13.

⁷⁰ Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* in *The Alchemist and Other Plays: Volpone, Or The Fox; Epicene, Or The Silent Woman; The Alchemist; Bartholomew Fair*, ed by Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), II.ii.11-12; Oscar Sherwin, "'All That Glisters Is Not Gold": A Devaluation of the Elizabethan Age, II', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 6 (1947), 549-560, p.557.

Structure

Chapter One explores the relationship between economic discourse and religious debates to show how the understanding of monetary principals shaped spiritual thought and drove the religious imperative to reject worldly or material concerns. The chapter begins with an investigation of the 1534 English translation of Antoine de Marcourt's French text of 1533, *Le Livre des Marchans* (*The Booke of Marchauntes*), which contains perhaps the most complete list of those dangerously valueless 'works'. These 'works' are presented as the worthless merchandise of the corrupt papal authorities. Similarly, George Joye's *Refutation of the Byshop of Winchesters Derke Declaration of his False Articles* (1546) accuses the papacy of being peddlers of 'trash' that they falsely present as requirements of 'faith'. Joye asserts that baptism was the first and only necessary 'justification' of 'faith'; he was also one of the earliest reformist authors to describe 'works' as 'papal trash'. During the Reformation English theologians debated about which religious practices should be defined as 'works' and whether those 'works' held spiritual value. Each was engaged in attempting to attribute value at a time of crisis, which, as I argue throughout this thesis, provided the impetus to describe something or someone as trash or trifle. Another shared feature of these discourses that aided the spread of 'trash talk' during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was the use and development of the English vernacular.

The use of the English vernacular rather than Latin in theological debates should be read, at least in part, as a political statement that aimed to assert England's religious independence from the papacy by diminishing the power held by the language of Rome. The term trash in particular, through its 'obscure' etymology, represents a perfect example of a vernacular term that was distinct from Latin influence; indeed, the increasing and developing use of the term trash (and its cognates) occurred at the same time as the English vernacular was undergoing a period of conscious expansion undertaken for political, national and religious reasons. The desire to shape and secure an independent English national identity required the development and proliferation of the vernacular, as Benedict

Anderson has demonstrated.⁷¹ The relationship was reciprocal; identity shaping fuelled the increase of the vernacular while the increased use of the vernacular developed the national language and, with it, a way to shape identity that was specific to the state. A key factor of shaping identity is the expression of value: hence the new and increasing prominence of trash and trifles.

In Chapter Two I examine how the vernacular terms trash and trifles were used in the emerging debates regarding the 'commonwealth' of England as a trading body with the potential, in the same way as a human body, to become imbalanced and therefore damaged or sick. Looking at the economic basis for early modern England's value discourse shows how notions of 'trash' and 'trifles' not only shaped the economic writing of the period, but also influenced religious and cultural thinking. Just as the theological writers of the English commonwealth used religious terms to voice a need for the segregation of religious trash and trifles from spiritual treasure, the commonwealth's economic writers also strove for balance in economic terms in relation to England's developing mercantile relationships. Sir Thomas Smith's *Discourse* (manuscript 1549, printed 1581) is accordingly the focus of Chapter Two. For Smith trifles and treasure are the humours that must be balanced to ensure the health of the 'commonweal'. In the *Discourse* the lack of balance in the 'commonweal' of England has produced an economic sickness – 'dearth'. Both the manuscript and printed version of this text respond to the concerns produced by a communal impression of destabilised value. 1549 was a time of crisis regarding the financial state of the nation, following the debasement of the coinage during the reign of Henry VIII; Smith's manuscript calls, in part, for Protector Somerset, regent for Edward VI, to save the 'commonweal' from 'dearth' by reforming the coinage through restoring its status as 'treasure'.

The earlier manuscript version is broadly the same as the version printed in 1581, but the latter responds to a different crisis, namely the concerns emanating from England's growing trading horizons. Sir Francis Walsingham's 'Memorandum on the Turkey Trade' of 1578 sought to investigate whether there was sufficient opportunity for 'proffitte and suertie' in trading with Turkey to balance out the

⁷¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p.41.

potential for damage to the English economy and reputation. Smith's text was printed in the same year that the Levant (Turkey) company was chartered: the argument the *Discourse* makes has been appropriately refocused towards a need for balance between trifles and treasure within the commonweal's store of commodities. The 'wealth' that is held in 'common' and required careful balancing was understood to include England's import and export trade – it was imperative that 'treasure' was not exported and replaced with 'trifles'. In 1581 the anxiety about value was focused upon managing the threat posed by worthless commodities without destabilising the balance of trade within the 'commonweal', allowing value to leak away.

Chapter Three begins by tracing the wider influence of Smith's work, in particular how his work on promoting the economic security of the English 'commonweal' formed the basis of parallel arguments in support of the exploration, and eventual colonisation, of the New World by Englishmen. It looks at the ways in which explorers and the natives they encountered thought about trash and trifling items and how they used their understanding to differentiate the valuable from the worthless. In 1555, the second year of Mary I's reign, Richard Eden, who had been Smith's pupil at Cambridge, translated and compiled *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*. In Eden's text, trash and trifles are given new implications, as things that may be potentially useful. The reader is informed that Columbus used material trifles to reward the 'gentylnes' of the native inhabitants, who valued these goods as 'precious marchaundies.'⁷² The Native American desire for England's low-value goods meant that trifles were a functional tool for trade and colonialism in the New World. Equally, the value of the lands of the New World was increased, as they were understood to offer a location for the venting of goods deemed as low-value, trifles, gawds or trash by the English. Yet, this native desire for trifles was also a potential source of anxiety; due to the religious conflicts that were occurring in Europe it became vital for reformers to ensure that it was not the religiously dangerous papal trash arriving from Spain that would corrupt the Native American population.

⁷² Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India Conteynyng the Nauigations and Conquestes of the Spanyardes, with the Particular Description of the Moste Ryche and Large Landes and Ilandes Latelly Founde in the West Ocean Perteynyng to the Inheritaunce of the Kinges of Spayne*, Trans. Richard Eden (Londini: In aedibus Guilhelmi Powell [for Edward Sutton], Anno. 1555), p.105. From EEBO.

Writers, working after Eden and the reign of Mary I, began to respond to a growing sense of competition between Spain and England. The colonisation of the New World was depicted as a necessary course of action to prevent Spain's hegemony and, through it, the power of the papacy. The economic drive to mine the New World's precious minerals, gather commodities and deposit England's trash was coupled with a moral, religious imperative to protect the New World from the influence of Catholic Spain and assert the supremacy and righteousness of Protestant England. Despite this apparently moral standpoint, the Native Americans were consistently represented as being overawed by English trash and therefore easy to fleece. In 1590 Theodore de Bry published the second edition of Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, which combined Thomas Harriot's text (1588) with engravings by de Bry, adapted from watercolours created by John White (1585). This text stands as a powerful piece of Protestant colonial propaganda published in English. The *Briefe and True Report* combines the concerns found in earlier discourses on religious and economic trash. England is presented as a religious prophylactic against the corruption of the New World that would occur if Spain were allowed to colonise. In economic terms England's protective relationship with the New World became reciprocal; as colonisers England had the right to reset the economic balance at home by depositing trash goods overseas and returning with foreign treasure. The rights and responsibilities of the English commonwealth can therefore be seen to have extended beyond the borders of England to include the areas it claimed as colonies; with this the identity of Smith's 'commonweal' took on a global dimension.

The final chapter of this thesis investigates the relationship between the politically motivated religious and economic discourses examined in the previous chapters and the theatrical landscape of England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Looking at how trash and trifles were represented on the stage in plays of this period offers a glimpse of the experience that the individuals outside early modern England's political elite had of the trash debates and the anxieties over value that generated them. The anti-theatrical movement often decried players and their plays as trash or other words synonymous with trash.

Rather than attempting to ignore the accusations of trash that had been levelled at the theatres, many playwrights chose to confront them. In Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (first performed in 1581, published in 1584) the audience is presented with a marketplace in crisis. The danger to the economy of England's commonwealth is personified as a sexually and financially unrestrained female protagonist, Lady Lucar, who employs the destructive force of the corrupt foreign merchant Mercadorus. At the end of the play, women become the community's scapegoats, punished and cast away, carrying the sins perpetrated by the community as a whole. Wilson's decision to embody concerns over trash in his uncontrolled female characters, who are in turn facilitated by a corrupt foreign merchant, displaces the attachment of those concerns from the theatre and its English male players. Chapter four concludes by tracing how, as the century drew to a close, the theatre increasingly linked trash and damage to the commonwealth with the uncontrolled activities of women – they are immoderate in their desire for trash, bankrupting husband and country (*Three Ladies*); their presence in the marketplace as commodities is disruptive (the courtesan Bianca is 'trash' masquerading as Desdemona); in *Bartholomew Fair* they have become trash – Joan Trash is accused of selling rotten gingerbread in the form of saints. Her wares and activity in the marketplace incorporate all the concerns over trash raised in previous chapters. The theatre contributed to the wider discourse of 'trash' and 'trifles', and in doing so it redefined those terms in order to protect itself from accusations that it was a dangerous, immoral and valueless entity (cultural 'trash').

This thesis explores the making of England's religious, social, political and commercial identity during this period through a careful analysis of its trash. It presents an image of how England saw itself and how England wanted to be seen by Europe and the rest of the world. The linguistic and literary expansion of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' was crucial to English life and thought in the sixteenth century; it helped define what was valuable and what was a threat to the body politic as well as being valueless in themselves. Finally, in the conclusion to this thesis, I will look beyond the temporal boundaries of this thesis to show that, despite the historical particularity of the events that resulted in the development and deployment of the terms trash and trifles, crises in value persisted and the meaning of these terms continued to develop; although later analyses of trash have

lost sight of this fact. Indeed, over a century after the first staging of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, in c.1730, a design for a ladies fan was produced that satirised the sale of material trifles within the festal marketplace of Bartholomew Fair. Similarly, the multitude of books and articles that contain the word 'trash' in their titles published in the last century demonstrates the lasting relevance of this thesis' concerns and the continuing development of the ways in which those terms are deployed, right up to the present day.

Chapter One

Sorting out the 'Trash': Determining the Future of the English Church

As outlined at the start of the Introduction, in *The Lamentacion of a Sinner Queen* Katherine Parr vehemently asserted her newfound and total rejection of the 'rifraf' and 'feyned tryfles' that 'the bisshoppe of Rome hath planted in his tyranny'.⁷³ The 'rifraf' and 'feyned tryfles' that the 'bisshoppe of Rome' stood accused of sowing, or 'planting', in the soil of English religion are presented as spiritually worthless and corrupting material objects. Queen Katherine confesses her prior observance of the 'vanities and shadowes of the worlde' and, rather than observing 'the spirituall honoring of y^e true liuyng god', she 'worshipped visible idoles, and ymages made of mennes handes'.⁷⁴ The things she denounces as 'rifraf' and 'feyned tryfles' are likely to have been religious images and statues of saints, but she may also have been referring to relics, rosary beads, church plate and altar ornaments; for the papacy all of these things were sanctified as being essential material elements of faith. Rather than accept the papacy's assertions of the spiritual necessity of these objects and the divine inspiration behind their creation, where any presence of luxurious worldly opulence was acceptable since it glorified God, Queen Katherine stresses their materiality. They are 'rifraf' and 'tryfles', 'made of mennes handes', since these items do not only lack spiritual value but, according to Parr, they are also emblems of spiritual corruption.

Queen Katherine presents the Pope's religious tyranny through the materiality of these supposedly spiritual objects, however it is notable that she does so by commenting on their value in explicitly mercantile terms. When Queen Katherine was writing *The Lamentacion*, both 'rifraf' and 'tryfles' were frequently deployed to describe the valuelessness of marketplace materials and commodities. From at least 1526 the word 'riffraff' had been used to signify 'Worthless things, rubbish; odds and ends' and, while 'trifle' was similarly used to refer to 'A small article of

⁷³ Parr, *The Lamentacion*, A.1r; A.4v.

⁷⁴ Ibid., A.2v; A.4r.

little intrinsic value' from as early as 1375, it was also used to connote specific marketplace goods that were commonly perceived to hold little real value – 'toy[s], trinket[s], bauble[s and] knick-knack[s]'.⁷⁵ Queen Katherine's use of these mercantile terms is contingent upon the materiality of the items that she is reacting against. The use of the terms 'rifraf' and 'feyned tryfles' in the *Lamentacion*, as well as the cognate use of trash or 'trish trash' in other sixteenth century Reformation texts, seamlessly intermingles the mercantile with the papist.

The use of mercantile terms to assess divine value is a literary commonplace within early English printed texts. The term trifle is found in pre-Reformation texts such as Henry Watson's 1509 English translation of Sebastian Brant's *Shyppe of Fooles*, which attacks the 'fooles preestes of the chirche' who 'tell full many tryfles and lyes the one to the other ... ledynge a charyot lyke ydeottes'.⁷⁶ In Watson's translation, the impropriety of 'preestes', who 'wyll not speke of the byble/ nor of the holy decretes/ nor passyon (wherfore) they can not', is compounded with the accusation that they 'wyll not go unto the chirch they be so enflambed with auaryce'; therefore, at the start of the sixteenth century the failure to maintain and express correct spiritual values affects the worth of religious messages, rendering them as valueless and misleading 'tryfles'.⁷⁷

Similarly, in the early years of the English Reformation (as Henry VIII sought to extricate himself from his marriage to Katherine of Aragon), when the first upsurge in the use of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' occurred (see Graph 1), John Frith's comparison of Christ to the Pope, *A Pistle to the Christen reader* (1529), describes the 'trifeling ... and deceytfull ceremonies' of 'weked masters' who cast 'the wordes of god as they were dyse', 'deceave us and make us unstable ... [and] make us fall and erre'.⁷⁸ Two years later Robert Barnes' *Supplicatyon* to Henry VIII (1531) was published. In it he attacked the 'pyllers/ and pollaxes and other

⁷⁵ "riff-raff | riffraff, n.2.a. and trifle, n.3.". *OED Online*. December 2012 [accessed 17 January 2013].

⁷⁶ Sebastian Brant, *The Shyppe of Fooles* ([Enprynted at London: In Flete strete by Wynky[n] de worde prynter vnto the excellent prynesse Margarete, Countesse of Rychemonde and Derbye, and grandame vnto our moost naturall souereyne lorde kynge Henry ye. viii., the yere of our lorde. M.CCCC.ix. [1509] the fyrste yere of the reygne of our souerayne lorde kynge Henry the viii. The. vi. daye of Iulii], 1509), Uiii^r. From EEBO.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ John Frith, *A Pistle to the Christen Reader The Revelation of Antichrist. Antithesis, Wherin Are Compared to Geder Christes Actes and Oure Holye Father the Popes.*, ed. by Philipp Melanchthon ([At Malborow in the lande of Hesse [i.e. Antwerp]: the. xij. day of Iulye, anno. M.CCCC.xxix. by me Hans luft [i.e. Johannes Hoochstraten,]], 1529), Fi^v. From EEBO.

ceremonies' of the unreformed papal Church as 'tryfles and thynges of nought.'⁷⁹ Equally, Richard Taverner's English translation of Philipp Melanchthon's *Confessyon of the Fayth of the Germaynes* and William Marshall's adaptation of Luther's *Wider den Falsch Genantten Geystlichen Stand des Bapst*, titled *The Images of a Veye Chrysten Bysshop, and of a Couterfayte Bysshop* – both printed in 1536 – also used mercantile terms to express the German Reformers' perceptions of the spiritual valuelessness of papal doctrine. In Taverner's translation papally sanctioned traditions, such as 'the honouryng of sayntes' and masses for the dead, are defined as 'tryfles and lyes', while Marshall's adaptation of Luther attacks 'papystycall vysurers' that 'suffre deceytes, smokes, vysures, puffed prowde wordes, tryfles, and bryefly mere madnesses to be preached, and that only for profyte and lucre'.⁸⁰

Despite their mercantile connotations, the terms trifle and trash were used frequently to describe the perceived worthlessness and deceptiveness of religious objects and theological positions. The fact that the use of these terms in this way required no explanation suggests its acceptance as a polemical strategy amongst early sixteenth century English readers. In fact, the intermingling of mercantile and spiritual has its foundation in earlier periods and is the product of a textual and ideological prehistory. Looking back to this prehistory offers an opportunity to explore the foundation of the textual and ideological intermingling of the mercantile with the spiritual, which fed into the vernacular arguments of Queen Katherine Parr and her fellow English Reformers.

⁷⁹ Robert Barnes, *A Supplicatyon Made by Robert Barnes Doctoure in Diuinitie, Vnto the Most Excellent and Redoubted Prince Kinge Henrye the Eyght. The Articles for Which This Forsayde Doctoure Barnes Was Condemned of Our Spiritualitye, Are Confirmed by the Scripture, Doctoures and Their Awne [sic] Lawe. After That He Disputeth Certayne Comon Places Which Also He Confermeth with the Scripture, Holye Doctoures and Their Awne [sic] Lawe* ([Antwerp: S. Cock, 1531?]), D8^v. From EEBO.

⁸⁰ Philipp Melanchthon, *The Confessyon of the Fayth of the Germaynes Exhibited to the Moste Victorious Emperour Charles The. v. in the Councell or Assemble Holden at Augusta the Yere of Our Lorde. 1530. To Which Is Added the Apologie of Melanchthon Who Defendeth with Reasons Inuincible the Aforesayde Confesyon Translated by Rycharde Tauerner at the Commaundeme[n]t of His Master Thomas Cromwel Chefe Secretarie to the Kynges Grace* ([Imprynted at London: In fletestrete, by me Robert Redman, dwellynge at the sygne of the George nexte to saynt Dunstones Church, 1536]), Ovii^v; Tviii^v. From EEBO; Martin Luther, *The Images of a Veye Chrysten Bysshop, and of a Couterfayte Bysshop* ([London]: Imprynted by Wylliam Marshall [i.e. Robert Wyer, 1536?]), Lvii^r-Lvii^v. From EEBO.

Trash and its Prehistory

Long before the English Reformation the Vulgate Bible of St Jerome and its English vernacular translations exemplified the didactic blending of mercantile terminology into the Christian spiritual message. The Book of Matthew relays Christ's allegorical description of the Kingdom of Heaven:

Agayne ye kyngdome of heve is lyke vnto treasure hidde in the felde ye which a man fyndeth and hideth: and for ioy therof goeth and selleth all that he hath and byeth that felde.
 Agayne ye kyngdome of heve is lyke vnto a marchaunt that seketh good pearles
 which when he had founde one precious pearle wet and solde all that he had and bought it.⁸¹

This parable makes use of material mercantile terms and imagery to explore and clarify spiritual doctrine. The Kingdom of Heaven is not only described using a term that, more recognisably, functioned to ascribe value to marketplace commodities, but is also personified as a mercantile trader. It 'is lyke vnto treasure hidde in the felde', and the discovery and recognition of its spiritual value induces man to part with all items of worldly value to 'byeth that felde.' It 'is lyke vnto a marchaunt' who, having 'founde one precious pearle', sold all his material wealth 'and bought it'.

Although the Kingdom of Heaven is being valued and described in mercantile terms, it is also being set apart, using those same terms, as especially worthy of esteem due to its non-material, spiritual status. Despite this shared form, religion is differentiated from mercantilism by being presented as the perfect object of esteem and valuation, which no material object can replicate:

What shall it proffet a man though he shulde wyne all the whoole worlde: yf he loose his owne soule? Or els what shall a man geve to redeme his soule agayne with all?
 ...Then Iesus sayde vnto his disciples: Verely I saye vnto you: yt is harde for a ryche ma to enter into ye kyngdome of heaven.
 And moreover I saye vnto you: it is easier for a camell to go through the eye of a nedle then for a ryche man to enter into the kyngdome of God.⁸²

⁸¹ *Tyndale Bible*, Matthew, 13.44-46. St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate Bible presents the passage thus: simile est regnum caelorum thesauro abscondito in agro quem qui invenit homo abscondit et prae gaudio illius vadit et vendit universa quae habet et emit agrum illum iterum simile est regnum caelorum homini negotiatori quaerenti bonas margaritas inventa autem una pretiosa margarita abiit et vendidit omnia quae habuit et emit eam
 [Matthew, 13.44-46 <<http://www.latinvulgate.com/>>]

Worldly goods, particularly those that are esteemed as earthly treasures, must be abjured in favour of the spiritual wealth of eternal life in Heaven. The Bible, as translated by St. Jerome, the Wycliffites or Lollards and Tyndale, thus demonstrates that the earliest Christian texts connected the mercantile with the spiritual. It allowed the words in the semantic range of trash to be used and understood as appropriate for use in both economic and spiritual debates: the divine needed to be valued in ways a layman or woman could understand.

Indeed, authors of spiritual material printed in English used the terms in this semantic range in the years preceding the Reformation. Examples of these earlier texts include Valentine Leigh's dialogue *The Pleasaunt Playne and Pythye Pathewaye Leadynge to a Vertues and Honest Lyfe* (1522), which reiterates this biblical point by stating 'these worldly riches and pleasures are none of thine... Therefore for terrestriall trifles sorowe not so'.⁸³ Similarly, John Ryckes' 1525 text, *The Ymage of Loue*, warns the reader to 'medell with no tryfles ne vanytees, couet not to please y^e world, ne fere not to dysplease it, yf thou wylte please god'.⁸⁴ The use of the term trifle (and its cognates) to express concern over the effect of an improper valuation of worldly objects and concerns, and of spiritual treasure, would become commonplace in the literature of the English Reformation; however, the authors of those Reformation texts were connecting with an older spiritual discourse that, in turn, had its origins in English biblical translation.

The translation of the Bible into the English vernacular led to, and was fed by, debates over linguistic, theological and scriptural valuation. The English language became the focus of debate regarding its capacity to render up the full value of the

⁸² Tyndale Bible, Matthew, 16.26; 19.23-24. St. Jerome's Latin *Vulgate Bible* presents the passage thus:

quid enim prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur aut quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua... Iesus autem dixit discipulis suis amen dico vobis quia dives difficile intrabit in regnum caelorum et iterum dico vobis facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire quam divitem intrare in regnum caelorum

[Matthew, 16.26; 19.23-24 <<http://www.latinvulgate.com/>>]

⁸³ Valentine Leigh, *The Pleasaunt Playne and Pythye Pathewaye Leadynge to a Vertues and Honest Lyfe No Lesse Profytable, Then Delectable*. V.L. (Imprynted at London: By Nicolas Hyll, for Iohn Case, dwellynge at the sygne of the Baule, in Paules church ye yerde, 1522), Ev^r. From EEBO.

⁸⁴ John Ryckes, *The Ymage of Loue Here Foloweth a Goostly Pamphlete or Mater Co[m]pendiously Extract of Holy Scripture, and Doctours of Ye Chyrche, Called Ye Ymage of Loue, Very Necessary for All Vertuous Persones to Loke Vpon* ([Imprynted at London: In the Flete strete at the sygne of the Sonne by Wynkyn de worde, The yere of our lorde. M.CCCCC. [and] xxv. The vij. daye of October], 1525), Civ^r. From EEBO.

spiritual treasure of the Word of God: in c.1390, the Augustinian canon and chronicler Henry Knighton denounced Wycliffe's translation of the Gospels from Latin into English because of the perceived failings or worthlessness of that vernacular. Knighton complains that Wycliffe 'transtulit de latino in anglicam linguam non angelicam' (translated from Latin into English, [which is] not angelic).⁸⁵ For Knighton, the non-angelic state of the English vernacular made it worthless and therefore unsuitable for rendering the spiritual treasure of the Word of God adequately. The valuelessness of the vernacular is also described as being destructive, since translating the Word of God into English opened that spiritual treasure up to the 'laicis et mulieribus legere scientibus' (laymen and women who know how to read), which made it 'vulgare' (common or popular).⁸⁶ In fiscal terms, Knighton wished to keep the English clergy's spiritual treasure secure from depreciating superfluity, by ensuring that Latin remained the sole linguistic currency in which the Word of God could be expressed. Knighton censured English for being worthlessly non-angelic (trash) and destructive (trashing) by stating, 'sic evangelica margarita spargitur et a porcis conculcatur' (thus the Gospel pearl is spread and trampled by swine).⁸⁷ The English vernacular may have been the common language of the English marketplace, but that did not necessarily make it appropriate for the English pulpit – Knighton is arguing for the separation of the spiritual Word of God from the mercantile English vernacular.

In fact, vernacular texts, including Bibles, were available and present in England, in French for example, which enabled the linguistically astute and educated English person to read Bibles in vernaculars other than their own.⁸⁸ Mary Dove asserts that, 'French Bibles were available from the late thirteenth century onwards, and the French Bible, in the form of the *Bible Historiale Complétée*, was the vernacular Bible with which Chaucer and his educated contemporaries were brought up.'⁸⁹ The success and lack of prohibition of this French vernacular Bible in England challenged the spiritual supremacy of Latin as the only valuable

⁸⁵ Gotthard Victor Lechler and Peter Lorimer, *John Wiclif and his English Precursors* (London: Kegan Paul, 1878), p.350

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.34-35.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.83.

linguistic currency; its presence was a reminder that sacred texts might have spiritual authority irrespective of the language in which they were written. It was the Word of God that was spiritual treasure rather than Latin, or indeed any other language that it had been translated into long before the Wycliffites embarked upon the Englishing of scripture; for example, in addition to the French editions, there were already Czech and German vernacular Bibles in circulation, examples of which remain extant.⁹⁰

When writing the prologue to his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, at around the same time that Knighton was denouncing the vernacular as ‘non angelicam’, Chaucer countered the idea that the English vernacular was worthless. For those without sufficient or any understanding of Latin, Chaucer advocated the use of ‘naked wordes in Englissh’, which he claimed were equally capable of presenting ‘trewe conclusions’ as their more classically respected Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew counterparts.⁹¹ Through translating and writing texts in English, and asserting the value of doing so, Chaucer demonstrated his belief in the worth of the English vernacular.⁹²

In his *Canterbury Tales* (written between 1390-1400; first printed c.1476), Chaucer produced an epic English morality tale in the vernacular, using the structure of the Greek, Latin and English (Wycliffite) Biblical texts that, like individual stories of *The Canterbury Tales*, were presented ‘with their individual prologues [and with] an overall prologue’.⁹³ Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* also forms part of the textual prehistory of intermingling the religious with the mercantile that we saw in Parr’s *Lamentacion*, since Chaucer also drew upon an older Biblical authority to shape his provocative vision of the corruption of spirituality by the mercantile. Each of his pilgrims represents an element of the mercantile and religious spheres. Among this group of pilgrims are those engaged in the

⁹⁰ Dove, *The First English Bible*, pp.34-35.

⁹¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Treatise on the Astrolabe* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd Ed., ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1988) p.622, 25-40.

⁹² This belief in the worth of the English vernacular was shared by the author of the preface to the 1532 edition of the works Chaucer who asserts that the English tongue had been ‘beautified’ and ‘bettered’ through the ‘vigilant and studious’ work of English writers like Chaucer. [Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Workes of Geffray Chaucer Newly Printed, with Dyuers Workes Whiche Were Neuer in Print before: As in the Table More Playnly Dothe Appere. Cum Priuilegio*, ed. by William Thynne d [(Printed at Lo[n]don: By Thomas Godfray, The yere of our lorde. M.D.xxxii. [1532]]], Aii^v. From EEBO.

⁹³ Dove, *The First English Bible*, p.42.

manufacture or sale of commodities – a Marchant, an Haberdasshere, a Carpenter, a Webbe (weaver), a Dyere and a Tapycer (weaver of tapestries); these individuals are accompanied by a Nonne (Nun) or Prioress, another Nonne (Nun) with ‘hir chapeleyne and preestes thre’, a Monk, a Frere, a povre Persoun (poor parson) of a Toun, a Somnour (server of summonses for an ecclesiastical court) and a Pardoner.⁹⁴

The last of these, the Pardoner, is particularly noteworthy. Although he is a papal servant, he performs that service by acting as a purveyor of papal indulgences and is shown to be preoccupied with mercantile matters. His religious credentials are clearly enunciated: the narrator explains that he ‘streight was comen fro the court of Rome... His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe/ Bretful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.’⁹⁵ The Pardoner himself states: ‘And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some;/ Oure lige lordes seel on my patente’ – not only has he been to the papal court in Rome to collect the pardons he will sell but he is also sanctioned to undertake that trade through the ‘bulles’ and Bishop sealed ‘patente’, which he uses as a ‘warente,/ That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,/ Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk.’⁹⁶ However, despite his religious vocation, the Pardoner is principally concerned with more worldly and mercantile matters; his desire to be fashionable means that:

[A] hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.⁹⁷

This description shows the Pardoner’s preoccupation with conforming to the material fashions of the marketplace; he dresses ‘for jolitee’ (fun) and thinks himself to be travelling ‘al of the newe jet’ (in the latest fashion). He even uses a traditionally religious or papal item to ornament his fashionable ‘cappe’: a ‘vernycle’ was a miniature reproduction of St. Veronica’s sacred cloth that bore the imprint of Christ’s face and was made into a badge of the pilgrimage to Rome. The

⁹⁴ Chaucer, ‘The Canterbury Tales’ in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd Ed., ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1988), The General Prologue, pp.23-36.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 671-687, p.34.

⁹⁶ Ibid., ‘The Pardoner’s Prologue’, 336-340, p.194.

⁹⁷ Ibid., ‘The General Prologue’, 680-685, p.34.

Pardoner has intermingled the mercantile with the papal by choosing to make this spiritual symbol into an object of conspicuous material display.

The mercantile arena is shown to have further polluted the Pardoner's role as papal merchant, when it is described in the General Prologue as 'his craft'.⁹⁸ Since, in addition to referring broadly to 'Intellectual power; skill; art', the word craft was also used to describe 'A branch of skilled work', which was used to produce or trade material goods in the marketplace and whose practitioners were frequently collected within a guild of artificers or tradesmen.⁹⁹ The Pardoner approaches his sale of indulgences with mercantile skill – when he states that 'in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,/ To saffron with my predicacioun,/ And for to stire hem to devocioun' he conflates the presentation of his sermons with mercantile sale; like an artificer or a merchant he uses a foreign import to increase the saleability of his product. Saffron, which was used to flavour foods and dye cloth in order to convince patrons to part with their money at the market stall, is given parity with the Pardoner's 'Latyn', which flavours and colours his sermons in order to bring his listeners to the 'devocioun' that will lead them to part with their money in church.¹⁰⁰

Like a mercantile trader, the Pardoner is concerned with profit. Although the theme of his preaching is 'Radix malorum est Cupiditas' [1 Timothy 6.10, 'Greed is the root of [all] evils'], the Pardoner is quick to assert that greed and the gaining of material wealth acts is his sole motivation.¹⁰¹ He revels in the fact that he is guilty of what he preaches against and that he preaches, or employs 'his craft', to satisfy that sin and 'wynne gold and silver'. It is significant that from the thirteenth century the word 'craft' also held a more negative connotation, since it was used to refer to worldly '[s]kill or art [being] applied to deceive or overreach; deceit, guile, fraud, cunning.'¹⁰² Certainly, in addition to feeding his sinful greed, the Pardoner's use of the accoutrements and preaching, which were the hallmarks of 'his craft', are also described as fraudulent devices to trick people into buying his brand of absolution.

⁹⁸ 'The Canterbury Tales', 'The General Prologue', 692, p.34.

⁹⁹ "craft, n.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2012 [accessed 31 October 2012]

¹⁰⁰ 'The Canterbury Tales', 'The Pardoner's Prologue', 345-346, p.194.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 334, p.194.

¹⁰² "craft, n.", *OED Online*.

Alongside his store of papal indulgences, the Pardoner also carries a host of mundane items that he falsely represents as religious relics, including: 'a pilwe-beer [pillow case],/ Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl', 'a gobet' of St Peter's sail and 'pigges bones' in a 'glas'.¹⁰³ The manner in which he employs these objects is described in the General Prologue:

But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre persoun dwellyng upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the persoun and the peple his apes.¹⁰⁴

The supposed holiness of 'thise relikes' – their spiritual value – has been translated by the Pardoner into a mercantile commodity whose marketplace value rests in their capacity to trick 'with feyned flaterye and japes' even the poorest people into becoming his 'apes' [fools] and parting with inflated sums of money.

It is telling that the Pardoner himself describes the wares of his 'craft' – papal pardons and counterfeit relics – as 'gaude(s)', since this word, part of the semantic range of trash and trifles, was commonly used to refer to worthless mercantile objects that were being fraudulently sold as valuable.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the word 'gaude' held both papal and mercantile meanings; when used in one way it referred to 'one of the larger and more ornamental beads placed between the decades of the 'aves' in a [Catholic] rosary', while, when used in another context it would have been understood to refer to 'a device to deceive'.¹⁰⁶ Certainly, the Pardoner admits that he has made money by fraudulently representing worthless goods as objects of spiritual value; through his 'gaude(s)...And...an hundred false japes moore' he claims to have 'wonne, yeer by yeer,/ An hundred mark, sith I was a pardoner.'¹⁰⁷

In Chaucer's brand of anti-clerical satire the Pardoner embodies the intermingling of the spiritual with the mercantile and the corruption of the former. Despite his role as a papal servant, the Pardoner has allowed his 'craft' to become mingled with mercantile behaviour and worldly concerns, which have, in turn, fed his greed and dangerously infected his spiritual health. The Pardoner's greed, or

¹⁰³ 'The Canterbury Tales', 'The General Prologue', 694-700, p.34.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 701-706, p.34.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Canterbury Tales', 'The Pardoner's Prologue', 389, p.195.

¹⁰⁶ "gaud, n.1 and n.2". *OED Online*. September 2012 [accessed 14 November 2012].

¹⁰⁷ 'The Canterbury Tales', 'The Pardoner's Prologue', 389-394, p.195.

rather his love of worldly goods and pleasures, prevents him from giving proper attention to the eternal spiritual treasure that would have awaited him in heaven if he had followed the teaching of Christ to:

Nile ye tresoure to you tresouris in erthe, where ruste and mouyte destrieth,
and where theues deluen out and stelen;
but gadere to you tresouris in heuene, where nether ruste ne mouyte
distrieth, and where theues deluen not out, ne stelen.
For where thi tresoure is, there also thin herte is.¹⁰⁸

The Pardoner actively disregards the value of 'ye kyngdome of heve' and rather than esteeming it as 'treasure hidde in the felde' he allowed himself to become preoccupied with collecting 'treasure vpon ye erth'. He ignored the biblical warning of both the capacity for 'rust...mothes...[and] theves' to destroy or remove earthly treasure and the danger that collecting this material wealth might have on his ability 'to enter into the kyngdome of God.' Chaucer has taken the materiality of the Biblical metaphor in order to exploit its satiric potential.

Chaucer's Pardoner is guilty of many of the abuses that were voiced in the anti-clerical accusations of Wycliffe and the 'Lollards'.¹⁰⁹ Matthew Groom explains that Wycliffe and his followers believed 'that the institutional church was corrupt and in need of reform'; they saw evidence of this corruption in 'the avariciousness of the clergy', which was the sin that Chaucer's Pardoner revelled in.¹¹⁰ The Pardoner also makes use of people's faith in images and the cult of saints in order to cheat them and support his material desires: the use of images and the cult of saints were other factors of the 'institutional church' that were condemned by Wycliffe and many of his followers.¹¹¹ Equally, even the Wycliffite disapproval of pilgrimages, which Groom refers to, is understandable when read in conjunction

¹⁰⁸ *Wycliffe Bible*, Matthew 6.19-21 from

<http://www.bibledbdata.org/onlinebibles/wycliffe_nt/40_006.htm>

¹⁰⁹ In his chapter 'England: Piety, Heresy and Anti-Clericism', Matthew Groom describes the caution needed when deploying the word 'Lollard': 'Above all, the term 'Lollard' is deeply problematic, since the contexts in which it was used are at best often vague and unclear. The word Lollard itself appears to have been derived from the Dutch and was used in that language as the word for a 'mumbler' (of prayers). While the word was certainly used by Englishmen as a term of abuse by contemporaries against heretics, it also had a rather more fluid meaning that was applied to those who displayed puritanical or evangelical religious tendencies but whose orthodoxy was nevertheless not in question... 'Lollardy' and 'heresy' were often, therefore, phenomena the medieval authorities and society chose to see or define as such, but for historians working today it is perhaps best not to place too much confidence in such labels.' From *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages*, S. H. Rigby, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 381-395, p.389.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.388.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

with the immorality of many of the pilgrims that feature in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.¹¹²

The older biblical allegories that had already fused the mercantile with the religious used a language that was developed in the medieval debates over Wycliffe and 'Lollardy'. This language presented a useful means for contesting the appropriateness of English as a 'target language' for the Holy Scriptures and the perceived spiritual corruption of the clergy through their apparent avariciousness for worldly, mercantile gain. The vibrant medieval tradition of fusing the mercantile to the spiritual continued into the Reformation. Indeed, the term 'Reformation', by definition, signifies a process of reshaping or 'reforming' rather than the creation of an entirely new model. The developing use of the terms 'trash' and 'trifles', as shown in Graph 1 in the introduction to this thesis, forms part of this process of continuation and adaption: there is a continuation of the medieval tradition of anti-clericism that was adapted to meet the demands of the Reformers. As anti-clerical feeling was amplified, with one of its new goals being the resistance of and opposition to material expressions of faith, the English vernacular underwent a period of expansion. As a result, the words in the semantic range of 'trash' and 'trifles' came to be employed to signify something yet more dangerous.

Expanding the vernacular

The creation of new terminologies of value must be considered in relation to debates over vernacular scripture, which was a pivotal point of conflict during the Reformation. In England and mainland Europe, Latin was the accepted academic, religious and legal language; Latin grammar was the only grammar. The expansion of the meaning of the terms trash and trifles and their application in social, economic and religious debates demonstrates the necessity of vernacular rhetorical devices. The development of an English vernacular tradition, in particular the translation of religious texts into English, was motivated by and a key element in the growth of reformed theology and the new English church that was created out of it. Cathy Shrank explains that, 'the investment in the English

¹¹² Groom, 'Piety, Hersey and Anti-Clericism', p388.

tongue was, in part, a reaction against Latin, the language of the Roman Church, and a necessary step in achieving Protestant, text-based worship, comprehensible to the whole congregation, learned and unlearned alike.¹¹³ As English national identity became tied to the Reformed faith the English language became 'the carrier of a national religious culture'.¹¹⁴

The desire to create distance from Latin necessitated appropriation, redefinition and invention within English. Trash, the English verb meaning 'to destroy' (in Latin: *dēlēre, ēvertere, dīrimere, perdere*), was appropriated; it was reshaped as a noun and redefined to include a sense of worthlessness (in Latin: *nūgae*).¹¹⁵ Then, through the explicit intermingling of the mercantile with the papal, the valueless sense of trash and the words in its semantic range were redirected towards the Church of Rome – trash and trifles acted as a signifier of a lack of value, and its deployment in early modern England signalled conflict over the value or worthlessness of a given idea or object. In addition to its clarifying function within the shaping of English religious identity, the vernacular also rose in prominence within the creation of a secular English literature and culture. The growing use of English allowed England to separate itself from mainland Europe.¹¹⁶

The valuelessness of all worldly display appears in John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (1519). The play takes the form of a medieval religious morality, with positive forces (Felycyte, Lyberte, Measure, Magnyfycence, Goodhope, Perseueraunce, and others) personified and beset by anthropomorphous evils (Counterfet Counte[nuance], Crafty Conueaunce, Clokyd Colusyon, Courtly Abusyon, Foly, Aduersyte and Myschefe). Magnyfycence's worldly goods, his 'plate of syluer', have been stolen and designated as 'trasshe'.¹¹⁷ Like the Pardoner before him, Magnyfycence has ignored Christ's directive to 'se that ye gaddre you not treasure vpon ye erth' and discovers the vulnerability and resultant worthlessness of his earthly treasures.¹¹⁸ Magnyfycence's worldly treasure is shown to be spiritually

¹¹³ Cathy Shrank, *Writing the Nation in Reformation England, 1530-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.15.

¹¹⁴ Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.187

¹¹⁵ *Collins Latin Dictionary and Grammar* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2006), English-Latin p.49; 172.

¹¹⁶ Shrank, *Writing the Nation*, p.15.

¹¹⁷ Skelton, *Magnyfycence*, G.iv.

¹¹⁸ *Tyndale Bible*, Matthew, 6.19.

worthless – it lacks the eternal quality of religious ‘treasure’ since ‘theves’ have been able to ‘breake through and steale’ it.¹¹⁹

Although the theft of these goods has materially impoverished Magnyfycence, at the same time he has also been spiritually enriched by the removal of the object of his sinful idolatry. Since Magnyfycence’s trash is described as ‘plate of syluer’, it can be associated with the Church plate (both silver and gold) that was the focus of anti-clerical criticism, since some saw its accumulation by the clergy as proof of their avaricious corruption. In this context trash again has a spiritual dimension, since the possession of it, by Magnyfycence and the clergy, is being shown to have the capacity to devalue an individual’s spiritual wealth and worth through idolatrous corruption.¹²⁰

Later, as the Reformation agenda was pressed further during the reign of Edward VI, the description of ‘plate of syluer’ as ‘trasshe’ would have held a particular significance since silver and gold plate were among the items of papal trash that were being removed from religious houses across England. MacCulloch explains that, ‘[i]n the last months of Northumberland’s regime [1553], plans were going ahead to list and confiscate most bells and a wide range of church plate from the parish churches.’¹²¹ Just as Chaucer’s Pardoner personifies religious corruption by promising absolution in the process of defrauding the faithful, using his counterfeit relics like a fraudulent merchant, the material presence of church wealth became proof of the papacy’s corruption by worldly goods and fuelled a Reformation drive to return to an earlier purity. For those in favour of religious reform, the English clergy who continued to promote the spiritual value of papal traditions – which imbued the material with supposed spiritual power and value – were, like the Pardoner, purveyors of papal trash or rather the merchants of goods that could only be spiritually worthless. John Pylbarough’s 1540 text, *A*

¹¹⁹ Tyndale Bible, Matthew, 6.19.

¹²⁰ Valentine Leigh’s *The Pleasaunt Playne and Pythye Pathewaye Leadyng to a Vertues and Honest Lyfe*, discussed above and printed three years after Skelton’s play, reaffirms the warning about the fragility and ultimate valuelessness of worldly treasure that is found in the biblical passage and the example of Magnyfycence’s loss by explaining:

By releuinge the poore, thou laiest vp in stoore,
A treasure, in heauen, to continue euermore,
Which neither canere can corrupte, neither theues, them conuaie,
Thus heauey treasure, for worldly trifles. [Bii^v]

¹²¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p.16.

Commemoration of the Inestimable Graces and Benefites of God, Infused through the Bryght Lyght of the Knowledge of his Holy Word, makes just such an assertion by stating that the 'ANTICHRIST of Rome hath longe dissimuled with vs, foodynge vs forthe with vanities: As pardons, pilgrimages, bulles, neuer ryght calued, supersticions, counterfeite religion, feyned relyques, and suche other innumerable sort of trashes, haberdashery ware, and all for money.'¹²²

Spiritual 'treasure' became increasingly intangible, set in opposition to material, secular 'treasure': in the process, material objects that had once been viewed as religious 'treasures' were being scrutinised, re-evaluated and reclassified as papal 'trifles', 'riffraff' and 'trash'. Reformers conflated the papal with the mercantile to articulate the concern that agents of papal authority were devaluing faith by selling worldly goods in the name of religion (simony), or allowing those items to be received as idols and worshiped sinfully (idolatry).¹²³ Papal 'trash' threatened the reformed English church. George Joye's *Exposicion of Daniel* (1545) denounced papal 'trifles' as 'idolatry false worship & blasphemies of gods glorie' that jeopardised spiritual treasure, since it led 'into the downe tredinge of the most precieuse blode of cryste and into the blasphemouse iniurie therof.'¹²⁴ The fact that pre-Reformation Christianity had appropriated mercantile terminology to

¹²² John Pylbarough, *A Commemoration of the Inestimable Graces and Benefites of God, Infused through the Bryght Lyght of the Knowledge of His Holy Word, in Our Most Dradde Soueraigne Lorde Henry the Eyght, by the Grace of God Kyng of Englande and of Fraunce, Defender of the the Fayth, Lorde of Irelande, and in Erth the Supreme Heed next and Immediate Vnder Christe of the Churche of Englande, with Hartye Prayse and Thankes Gyuyng Vnto God for the Same, / Composed Uppon the Glad Prophecy and Ioyefull Psalme of Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel. &c.* (Londini: in ꝑdibus Thomę Bertheleti typis impress. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum., Anno .M.D.XL., 1540), Bii^r. From EEBO.

¹²³ The term 'Reformer' is being used in preference to 'Protestant' because, as Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie remind us, for much of the first half of the sixteenth century, 'a 'Protestant' was by definition a German', which referred in particular to the German Lutheran states allied in war against Charles V. Indeed, it was not until the late 1540s that English reformers began to be named as 'Protestants', but even then the term was not 'fully current [until] the middle of Mary Tudor's reign'. The English Reformation would have been understood by contemporaries as dispute between Christians, in which both sides of the debate self-determined as Catholics striving to take charge of the direction their Church would take – Reformed or Conservative. To a large extent this dispute can be understood as a crisis of value, with one side arguing for the value of 'works' in conjunction with 'faith' for the salvation of the human soul and the other side not only stating the worthlessness of 'works' but also the threat that they posed to those souls they professed to be engaged in saving. [Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Introduction' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.5.]

¹²⁴ George Joye, *The Exposicion of Daniel the Prophete Gathered Oute of Philip Melanchton, Iohan Ecolampadius, Chonrade Pellicane [and] out of Iohan Draconite. [et] C. By George Ioye. A Prophecy Diligently to Be Noted of Al Emprowrs [and] Kinges in These Laste Dayes* ([Emprinted at Geneue [i.e. Antwerp: By the successor of A. Goinus]], In Auguste., 1545), Ciii^r. From EEBO.

illustrate the spiritual value of faith provided the foundation for an attack on papal traditions and corruption that utilised terms more commonly associated with mercantile indictments of fraudulence and valuelessness.

The assertion that the English Reformation – a term that in this case is used to refer to the ‘larger crisis’ in English religion that occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – can be characterised as a war of words has been made by Elizabeth L. Eisenstein in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1980). Her intention was to press for a re-evaluation of the part played by the development of print technology in the Reformation.¹²⁵ According to Eisenstein the power of printing had been drastically underestimated since, as she explains, ‘[i]t is given no part in shaping new views but only seen to diffuse them after they have been formed.’¹²⁶ Rather than simply rehearse Eisenstein’s argument, this chapter explores the words in the semantic range of trash and trifles as they appeared and proliferated in Reformation English writing, particularly in print. Throughout the manuscript and printed sources of this period, the language employed to shape the Reformation war of words returns again and again to this mercantile language of abjection and denigration.

In *The Literary Culture of the Reformation* Brian Cummings explains that, ‘[w]riting was produced in the context of a religious crisis which overwhelmed political and social culture.’¹²⁷ Although this crisis was certainly occurring elsewhere in Europe, the situation in England was peculiar since, ‘England changed religion more frequently, more equivocally, and with greater political insistence then perhaps anywhere else. It has been calculated that English religious polity suffered seven reformations in this space of twenty-five years.’¹²⁸ At the start of Henry VIII’s reign, the character of the English Church was virtually indistinguishable from the pre-Renaissance/ Reformation form of worship, since the varied customs of the ‘medieval’ church were still very much intact – as Peter Marshall points out, Henrician worship included: ‘sacraments, relics, fraternities, festivities, pilgrimages and pious books’ all of which could ‘plausibly be read as a

¹²⁵ Cummings, *Literary Culture*, p.7.

¹²⁶ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, Volumes I and II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.368.

¹²⁷ Cummings, *Literary Culture*, p.5

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.8

sign of health and confidence.¹²⁹ However, the Reformation also generated confusion over which, if any, of these elements of worship were necessary for the expression of their faith. It had become unclear which of the traditional practices of pre-Reformation worship should be discarded as material trash, and which would retain spiritual value. This lack of clarity was a source of anxiety, since arriving at the wrong conclusion imperilled the soul and, if that conclusion should differ from the resolution of the state, could result in punishment, even death.

As Henry's reign went on some of the elements that caused this confusion would become the focus of reforming scrutiny. John Colet's 1511 sermon to the Convocation, which has subsequently been used to assert that Colet was a 'precursor of the Reformation', called for the clergy (the fraternities) to reform their behaviour and to adhere to 'an absolute purity of life and a restraint in temporal matters'.¹³⁰ In relation to this sermon, Marshall states that: '[t]he aspiration for reform was almost universal in educated lay and clerical circles at the start of the sixteenth century'¹³¹. However, these 'educated' proponents of the Reformation were not all in agreement about what form the measures should take, or how far they should go. Cummings explains that, '[t]he Reformation as a historical event has traditionally been seen as a battle between two religious groups, but it might be truer to say that it was a process founded on division: between new and old, protestant and catholic, righteous and sinner, 'faith' and 'works', repentance and reprobates, or elect and damned'; to this system of divisional binaries we should add trash and treasure.¹³²

As the reformers began to loosely separate into conservative and radical camps, John Skelton – as we have seen, the author of the earliest recorded English text to use 'trash' to designate worthlessness (*Magnyfycence* 1519) – attacked the arguments of Martin Luther and his followers in *A Replycacion Against Certayne Yong Scholars* (1527). In this work he attacks the 'new learning' by describing it as: 'A lytell ragge of rethorike,/ A lesse lumpe of logyke,/ A pece or a patche of philosophy', which leads its followers to drown in 'dregges of diuinite' and end up

¹²⁹ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), p.11.

¹³⁰ J. B. Trapp, 'Colet, John (1467-1519)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); Online Edition, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5898>, accessed 28 Feb 2012]

¹³¹ Marshall, *Reformation England*, pp.11-12.

¹³² Cummings, *Literary Culture*, p.13.

'vndone and vtterly shamed.'¹³³ Mercantile terminology is once again being intermingled with religion to protect the papacy: the Reformers' arguments are being likened to valueless marketplace rubbish – they are an allegorical off cut, a 'ragge', 'pece' or 'patche' that is more suitable for discarding than use. Similarly, numerous texts by Thomas More (two printed in 1529, one printed in 1532 and three printed in 1533) described the Reformist writing of Martin Luther, William Tyndale, Simon Fish, John Frith and Robert Barnes as deceitful and valueless 'tryfles' that were made up of 'tryflynge' arguments and teachings.¹³⁴

Skelton's and More's decision to confront the 'new learning' using the vernacular was not, perhaps, the most logical choice because, as Cummings explains, 'Latin was the language of the church and of scholarship'.¹³⁵ In comparison with Latin the English vernacular was in its infancy and, unlike Latin, it had not evolved to include the established technical terminology necessary for conventional debate about abstract ideas. Using the vernacular to defend traditional church doctrine, written and spoken in Latin, required 'coinages' – the creation or re-appropriation of terms with new meanings, such as Skelton's 'lytell ragge of rethorike', More's 'tryfles' or the restructuring of trash from verb to noun and from signifying destruction to highlighting worthlessness. For all the benefits that might be present in using the fluid vernacular, where new terminology could be created and tailored to the specifics of the debate underway, there was the clear

¹³³ John Skelton, '[A Lytell Ragge of Rethorike]' in *The Poetical Works of John Skelton: Principally According to the Edition of the Rev. Alexander Dyce. In Three Volumes* (Boston--Cincinnati: Shepard, Clark and Co.--Little, Brown and Company--Moore, Wiltach, Keys and Co., 1856), 232. From LION.

¹³⁴ Thomas More, *A Dyaloge of Syr Thomas More Knyghte: One of the Counsayll of Oure Souerayne Lorde the Kyng [and] Chauncellour of Hys Duchy of Lancaster. Wherin Be Treated Dyuers Maters, as of the Veneration [and] Worshyp of Ymages [and] Relyques, Prayng to Sayntys, [and] Goyng O[n] Pylgrymage. Wyth Many Othere Thyngys Touching the Pestilent Sect of Luther and Tyndale, by the Tone Bygone in Sarony, and by Tother Laboryed to Be Brought in to Englonde* ([Enprynted at London: [By J. Rastell] at the sygne of the meremayd at Powlys gate next to chepe syde in the moneth of June, the yere of our lord. M. [and] C.xxix, 1529), Qii^v. From EEBO; *The Supplycacyon of Soulys Made by Syr Thomas More Knyght Councellour to Our Souerayn Lorde the Kyng and Chauncellour of Hys Duchy of Lancaster. Agaynst the Supplycacyon of Beggars*, Early English Books ([London: W. Rastell, not after 25 Oct. 1529]), Fii^v; Gi^r. From EEBO; *The Co[n]futacyon of Tyndales Answere Made by Syr Thomas More Knyght Lorde Chau[n]cellour of Englonde* (Prentyd at London: By wyllyam Rastell, 1532), Eei^v; p.cx; p.cxlili; p.clii; p.cxcxi. From EEBO; *The Answere to the Fyrst Parte of the Poysened Booke, Which a Namelesse Heretyke Hath Named the Souper of the Lorde. By Syr Thomas More Knyght* ([London]: Prented by w. Rastell in Fletestreet in saynt Brydys chyrch yarde, 1534 [i.e. 1533]), pii^r; Biii^v; Cvii^v; Ni^r. From EEBO; *The Apologye of Syr Thomas More Knyght* ([London]: Prynted by w. Rastell in Fletestrete in saynte Brydys chyrch yarde, 1533]), Riv^v; Eei^v; Ffi^v. From EEBO; *A Letter of Syr Tho. More Knyght Impugnyng the Erronyouse Wrytyng of Iohn Fryth Agaynst the Blessed Sacrament of the Aultare* ([Printed at London: By W. Rastell, 1533]), c.iv^r. From EEBO.

¹³⁵ Cummings, *Literary Culture*, p.189.

difficulty of presenting an argument defending the tradition of religion in a language 'in which that tradition was as yet unwritten'.¹³⁶

Although the vernacular would develop over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into the principal language of the English church and state, that development involved a concentrated effort and 'literary struggle' to create a scholarship of the vernacular; in short, '[t]he story of the English Reformation is the story of the politics of the vernacular and at the same time of what we may call vernacular theology.'¹³⁷ A key part of this 'story' of vernacular theology and expansion is the deployment of 'papal trash'.

'Papal Trash': the use of the expanded vernacular in the face of conflict

The *OED* provides no clear or definitive linguistic origin for the noun trash, explaining instead that it was 'known only from 16th cent.; [its] origin obscure.'¹³⁸ This may have made the word all the more appealing to those seeking religious reform. By lacking ties to the Latinate language that typified Rome and unreformed religion, trash provided an addition to the English vernacular that was free from papal associations. However, the synonyms of trash had been deployed in the literature of preceding eras. As we have seen, when Queen Katherine Parr referred to the Pope's 'feyned tryfles' and 'rifraf' she played on an established tradition of intermingling the papal with the mercantile and, in order to do so, she deployed words that were similarly established as markers of mercantile valuelessness. According to the *OED* the first recorded use of the word trifle, to refer to '[a] small article of little intrinsic value', is found as early as 1375 in the *Will of Eliz. Lister* (held at Somerset House Archive).¹³⁹ It is recorded next in *The Wars of Alexander* (c.1400-1450), where certain objects (a 'herne-payn', a 'hand-balle' and a 'hatt made of twygges') are described by the author as the 'trufels' he had been sent.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Cummings, *Literary Culture*, p.189.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.188.

¹³⁸ "trash, n.1". *OED Online*. December 2011 [accessed 25 February 2012].

¹³⁹ "trifle, n.3". *OED Online*. [accessed 26 February 2012].

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous, *The Wars of Alexander: An Alliterative Romance Translated Chiefly from the Historia Alexandri Magni De Preliis: Leo, Archipresbyter* (London: Published for the Early English text society, by N. Trübner & co., 1886), Lines 1894-1895, p.107.

'Rifraf' however, is a later addition to the vernacular lexicon of valuation; the first recorded use of riffraff to signify '[w]orthless things, [or] rubbish' appeared in 1526, in William Bonde's *Pylgrimage of Perfection*.¹⁴¹ In the first book of Bonde's text, Christian doctrine is presented as the purified distillation of the philosophies of other nations and faiths:

the christen people after the ordinaunce of god/ hath spoyled bothe the iewes and also the philosophers. We haue nat taken their ryffe raffe: for we haue nat taken their errours: but the noble veritees or trutthes of philosophy/ and all moralitees and instruccions of good maner and policy/ or other gouernaunce of the people: whiche the Romans and other gentyles vsed/ but vnlike to vs: For they vsed all to the honor of their flase godds.¹⁴²

Christianity has absorbed the best parts of other religious philosophy and had made it into spiritual treasure by redirecting it towards 'the honor' and worship of the true Christian God.

An even later coinage than 'rifraf', trash is a relatively late addition to a lexicon of value in which the papal and the mercantile might be conflated. The late appearance of trash explains the results shown in Graph 1: when comparing the numbers of texts that featured the term trash with those that used trifle it was clear that trifle, as the earlier coinage, was present in greater numbers of texts than the term trash. This graph also indicates clearly that, in the case of both terms, their use increased substantially during the sixteenth century (beginning in the 1520s). However, while both orthodox and reforming religious writers used the term trifle to denounce the views of their opponents, trash is almost exclusively found in the writings of those who attacked papal traditions, objects and teaching. The reason for this is not obvious or explicit, however the relative newness and Englishness of the term may have made it more attractive to the Reformers than the orthodoxy; equally, the use of the term by the Reforming cause could have made it less appealing for orthodox writers.

The earliest recorded use of the word trash in relation to religious worthlessness is not found in the published literature of the Reformers, but rather

¹⁴¹ "riff-raff | riffraff, n.2.a.". *OED Online*. September 2012 [accessed 14 November 2012].

¹⁴² William Bonde, *Here Begynneth a Deuout Treatyse in Englysshe, Called the Pylgrimage of Perfection Very P[ro]fitable for All Christen People to Rede: And in Especiall, to All Relygious P[er]sons Moche Necessary* ([Imprinted at London: In Fletestrete, besyde saynt Dunstans church, by Richarde Pynson, pri[n]ter to the kynges noble grace. Cu[m] priuilegio, Anno domini. 1526]), Biiiii^r-Biiiii^v. From EEBO.

in the private correspondence that passed between the politicians and clergymen effecting those reforming changes. A private letter dated 27th September 1538 sent from John Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester, to Thomas Cromwell is evidence of an early, unpublished use of this word. Hilsey had been travelling to 'Lyn' (presumably King's Lynn in Norfolk) on a commission, begun in 1534, to obtain the surrender of all the friaries of England to the Royal Supremacy.¹⁴³ On route, he 'came to this towne of Thetfford', in the Breckland district of Norfolk, where he tells Cromwell that:

the Austyn Freres I fonde so bare that ther was no erthly thinge att all but *trasshe and bagage* wherfore I thought it most convenient or I went eny further to discharge them of ther said howses/ and so have I done.¹⁴⁴
[emphasis mine]

At the end of his letter he adds the postscript:

I thowght nott to have medlyd wythe these howses tyll I had known furder off your lorshippes pleasure but they ware soe farre gone that, yff they had contynewyed all had byn spolyd.¹⁴⁵

This letter is the earliest extant text in English to refer to papal 'trash' and shows how the word 'trasshe' was beginning to proliferate in a religious context. Hilsey is assured of the necessity of swift and decisive action, even without official sanction, against the presence of 'trasshe' at a religious site. Implied in this need for swiftness is an idea that 'trash', if left alone, was capable of worsening a poor situation – 'trash' is shown to have the capacity to pollute and destroy.

In 1542, four years after Hilsey's letter and five years before the publication of Parr's text, Henry Brinkelow's *Lamentacion of a Christian* became the first published English text to refer to papal 'trishtrash'. Unlike every other mercantile term to be intermingled with the papal to ascribe valuelessness, this relative newcomer is prefaced with another word. Once again, a mercantile term has been adopted and adapted for use against the papacy; here it has been theologically doubled. Brinkelow has reshaped a term, which indicated destructive worthlessness, to rhythmically resonate with the 'riffraff', which had been used to

¹⁴³ S. Thompson, 'Hilsey, John (d. 1539)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Sept 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13325>, accessed 15 Nov 2012]

¹⁴⁴ John Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester. "John [Hilsey], Bishop of Rochester, to Cromwell." 27 Sept 1538. MS State Papers, Henry VIII. SP 1/137 f.33. From SPO.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

denote the 'Worthless things, rubbish; odds and ends' that could be found in both secular and spiritual marketplaces.

Alec Ryrie has noted that, 'Brinklow was certainly one of the most outspoken evangelicals of his time. He demanded that all remnants of traditional religion be swept away, urging particularly that the 'forked cappes', the bishops, be stripped of their power.'¹⁴⁶ In light of this, Brinkelow's text should be read as a response to a creeping reversal in religious reform by the Henrician regime.¹⁴⁷ The Act of Six Articles, passed by parliament in 1539, affirmed the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament, the need for celibacy in the priesthood, the existence of purgatory, the efficacy of masses for the souls of the dead, expediency of 'auricular confession' and had denied the 'necessity' of offering communion 'to all persons'.¹⁴⁸ Such theological backtracking would have signalled for many, including Brinkelow, the return of worthless and spiritually dangerous papal orthodoxy.

The anxiety over such backtracking was expressed swiftly, in 1540 the full title of John Pylbarough's *Commemoration of the Inestimable Graces and Benefites of God* (discussed earlier) reminded Henry VIII of 'the bryght lyght of the knowledge' he had previously shown by recognising 'pardons, pilgrimages, bulles, neuer ryght calued, supersticions, counterfeite religion, feyned relyques, and suche other innumerable sort of trashes, haberdashery ware' as the worthless merchandise of the 'Antichrist of Rome'.¹⁴⁹ Further to this, in the same year (1540), Richard Tracy's English translation of John Frith's *Of the Preparation to the Crosse, and to Deathe and of the Comforte Vnder the Crosse and Death* described acts of faith, such as 'prescript dayes of fastynge, vowed chastitie, shurtes of heare, disgysed garmentes', as 'trifles, which god hath not commaunded'.¹⁵⁰ From its creation Reformist writers recognised the Act of Six Articles as a return to reliance on deceptive and worthless spiritual trifles.

When Brinkelow directly addresses his 'reader' to warn them about: 'all the

¹⁴⁶ Alec Ryrie, 'Brinklow, Henry (d. 1545/6)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) Online Edition, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3437>, accessed 14 Nov 2012]

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Gerald Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1994), p.224.

¹⁴⁹ Pylbarough, *A Commemoration of the Inestimable Graces and Benefites of God*, Aii^r; Bii^r.

¹⁵⁰ John Frith, *Of the Preparation to the Crosse, and to Deathe and of the Comforte Vnder the Crosse and Death, Two Bokes Very Fruictefull for Deuoute People to Rede, Translated from Latyn to Englysshe*, by Rycharde Tracy ([Londini: In aedibus Thomae Bertheleti typis impress. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum, Anno. M.D.XL. [1540]]), Bi^v. From EEBO.

trishtrash that Antichrist hath soald vs/ Which trish trash be implements of the masse of Antichrist/ I mean not the Antichrist of Rome onely/ but also of Wynchester/ of London/ of Dyrrham/ Salisbury and Worceter etc. with all their brethren in Antichrist', he allies the papal with both the mercantile and the workings of Hell.¹⁵¹ By linking valueless papal 'implements' to the workings of the 'Antichrist' Brinkelow is exploiting the twin significances of trash, meaning both worthlessness and destruction. This connects with the term's earlier meaning, since the word trash also resonates with the medieval literary past, as in the duplicitous and destructive 'trasshe[ing]' of Troy in Lydgate's *The Hystroye, Sege and Dystruccyon of Troye*. According to Brinkelow the Pope and his followers in England are not only 'brethren in Antichrist' but are also presented as merchants, attempting to sell the 'Antichrist's' 'trishtrash' to the faithful in England in order to destroy the Reformation and imperil the collective English soul. Brinkelow's 'implements' may simply refer to papal objects, like those Katherine Parr would describe as being 'made of mennes handes'; equally, 'implements' might refer to ritual or doctrine: things seen as conspicuously of the world.

This motif, of the conservative or Popish priest as a merchant, reappears three years later in John Bale's *The Image of Bothe churches after Reulacion of Saynt Iohan the Euangelyst* (1545), which positions the Popish priest as mercantile importer who 'must bringe in soche tryfles / as are their owne beggerlye merytes.'¹⁵² It is also apparent in George Joye's *Refutation of the Byshop of Winchesters Derke Declaration of His False Articles* (1546). Whereas Brinkelow had focused his accusations at England's bishops, including 'Wynchester', Joye announces the 'byshop of Winchester' to be the principal focus of his *Refutation*. Throughout the opening letter to his reader, Joye positions the Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, as the figurehead and perhaps *de facto* leader of the 'popes frendes' within England; indeed, Joye goes further and names Gardiner as the Pope's 'owne obedient sworne sonne'¹⁵³. '[T]he popes frends', like Gardiner,

¹⁵¹ Henry Brinkelow, *The Lamentacion of a Christian, Against the Citie of London Made by Roderigo Mors*. Anno Domini M.D.XLII., ([Prynted at Jericho [i.e. Bonn]: In the land of promes by Thome Trauth [i.e. L. Mylius], 1542]), Cii^v. From EEBO.

¹⁵² John Bale, [*The Image of Bothe Churches after Reulacion of Saynt Iohan the Euangelyst*], ([Antwerp: S. Mierdman?, 1545]), Kviii^v. From EEBO.

¹⁵³ George Joye, *The Refutation of the Byshop of Winchesters Derke Declaratio[n] of His False Articles, Once Before Confuted by George Ioye Be Not Deceiued by This Bysshops False Bokes. Heare Novve the*

are seen by Joye as the perennial oppressors of reform, who continue to corrupt the English church through valueless ‘popish trysh trash’ – condemning, banishing and burning those texts and authors that they could not suppress through their backroom political machinations.¹⁵⁴

Gardiner is depicted not only as a murderer but also a hypocrite whose ‘faith’, which he was prepared to ‘murder’ for, was maintained only for political position and preferment. Brinkelow and Joye are thus pioneers in the articulation of trash and valuelessness: Joye’s *Refutation* expands upon the argument of Brinkelow’s *Lamentacion*:

This is sufficient to declare the vse of oure baptisme with water, & that we be iustified by faith only before it, ere we can repent frutfully, & thus is al your popish trysh trash contayned in your other second condicion cleane wypt away from thatainment of iustificacion.¹⁵⁵

Joye asserts that faith alone, as marked by baptism, was the sole form of ‘justification’ necessary for salvation; ‘works’, of the kind enshrined in the Act of Six Articles are simply ‘popish trysh trash’. They are not only valueless, but damaging to faith in England and the immortal souls of those who accept them as their route to salvation. Gardiner is presented as a hypocritical and corrupt peddler of ‘popish trysh trash’, attempting to sell ‘works’ as a spiritual necessary when faith alone is ‘sufficient’ justification.

In calling attention to the hypocrisy and corruption of the papal regime, by claiming that faith alone justifies, and by focusing only on scripture, Joye connects with a literary tradition that emerged from the Germanic reformist movement spearheaded by Martin Luther. In the hints he makes to the martyrdom of Robert Barnes, Joye plays out a biblical formula that would eventually become

Tother Parte, and Iudge Truely of the Trueth. For the Veritie Vvyll Haue the Victorye (Printed at London: By J. Herford, 1546), A.iv; B.iv. From EEBO.

¹⁵⁴ Later in his *Refutation*, Joye focuses upon the burning of Robert Barnes at Smithfield on the 30th July 1540 as evidence of Gardiner’s role in murder and martyr making. Joye begins by refuting Gardiner’s denial both that he had sought Barnes’ death and that Barnes had been burnt for arguing for justification by faith. Joye reminds the reader (Gardiner) that Barnes was ‘your scoler’ as it served the reforming cause to play on the time shared at Cambridge by Barnes and Gardiner during the 1520s, since it made it possible to hint at a friendship existing between the pair, which functioned to further vilify Gardiner – as Riordan and Rylie explain, if he was willing to ‘procure his friend’s death by secret means, anything could be believed of him.’ [Carl R. Trueman, ‘Barnes, Robert (c.1495-1540)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Sept 2010 [accessed 22 Feb 2012] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1472>> and Michael Riordan and Alec Rylie, ‘Stephen Gardiner and the Making of a Protestant Villain’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34 (2003), 1039-1063, p.1050.

¹⁵⁵ Joye, *Refutation*, K.viii.

synonymous with the suffering for faith by Protestants in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* or *Book of Martyrs* (published in English by John Day in 1563). Thus, Joye's text takes part in the creation of a Protestant literary tradition that combined biblical martyrology with Lutheran Protestantism, and which produced books that were marketplace commodities as well as devotional items that highlighted the worthlessness of papal 'trishtrash'. Through announcing its spiritual worth in this manner, this Protestant literature also disguised its own materiality as a marketplace commodity.

In 1547, the year after the publication of *The Refutation*, a second edition of the English translation of Antoine de Marcourt's *Livre des Marchans* (1533) was published. Compared with the first translation of 1534, the second translation is much expanded, at roughly twice the length. While both editions broadly follow the same line of argument, the word 'trysetrase' only appears in the 1547 edition. The state of the Reformation in England was markedly different in 1547 to how it had been in 1534; the first translation had been produced at the start of a decade that witnessed legal changes that promised positive things for the future of the English Reformation. In 1532 the clergy had submitted to the Royal Supremacy and, by 1534, denying the Royal Supremacy had become treason and punishable by death; in short, the power of Rome seemed to have been absolutely routed and removed from England. However, the second translation was published after the passing of the Act of Six Articles. This second translation, like Brinkelow's *Lamentacion*, responds to these changing circumstances, which threatened to return dangerous and valueless papal 'trysetrase' to the English spiritual economy.

The Marcourt translation, like Joye's *Refutation*, devalues an orthodox demand for 'justification by works'. The clergy who were unwilling to relinquish these demands are characterised as 'marchants' and 'woluish grossers', whose corrupt power is such that:

nothyng scapeth them, but at their plasures thei occupi it, yea men, women, childern, now borne and vnborne, bodyes, soules of the quicke and dead of goodes visible and inuisible, heauen, earth, and helle bread, meat, tyme and dayes. Mariage, vestimentes, rasures, shauing, anointinges, clothinges, bulles, pardons, indulgences, remissions, bones other relykes and rogacions, expectyues, dispences, exemptions, sacramentes, and holi workes of god. Of bread, wine, oyle, towe, mylke, water, salt, fyer, fumigations, encensynges, ceremonies, songes, melodies, wod and stone, of brotherhodes, inuentions,

tradicions, deceptions, lawes and wythout nombre of such trysetrase, wherby they can meruelously well drawe money to them.¹⁵⁶

By listing every conceivable supplementation to 'justification by faith' upheld by conservative, orthodox religion each element is designated as 'trysetrase'; some, in particular the 'bulles, pardons, indulgences...[and] bones other relykes', were the very tools Chaucer's Pardoner had used to deceptively 'drawe money to [him]'. Furthermore, this listing of papal items expressly denies any spiritual function and reduces them to a simple catalogue of objects. It is intentionally reminiscent of the manner in which hawkers listed the wares they sold in their marketplace cries; like the hawkers, papal agents offer up their commodities with the sole intent of 'drawe[ing] money to them'. As noted earlier, 'trysh trash' connects rhythmically and thematically with 'rifraf', with both terms intermingling the spiritual or papal with the mercantile.

By stating that these worthless papal goods are both 'visible and inuisible' in their form, *The Booke of Marchaunts* goes beyond Queen Katherine's claims of the valuelessness of material or 'visible' papal goods. Marcourt's text not only denies the value of the visible religious images, statues of saints, relics, rosary beads, altar ornaments, gold and silver church plate, but also the 'inuisible' or non-material tenets of the papal faith, such as its theological teachings and spiritual commandments. In many ways *The Booke of Marchaunts* presents a perfect epitome of the use of mercantile terms for spiritual valuation, with 'trysetrase' and 'tryfe trafe' being used to denounce both the material and the spiritual – the 'visible and inuisible' are described as being equally worthless, unnecessary and dangerous.

Indeed, the Romish clergy are accused of promoting so many unnecessary religious abuses that they are 'wythout nombre'. On the following page of the text all of these items are grouped under the designation of 'bones and other trashe of dead thinges vnlafull'.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the supplementations to 'justification by faith' are being presented as a stock of worthless merchandise, sold for the financial benefit of corrupt papal authority and to the detriment, both fiscal and spiritual, of the English church. Brinkelow, Joye and the translator of Marcourt all make the same

¹⁵⁶ Marcourt, *The Booke of Marchauntes*, Bi^v.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Biii^r.

telling connection; the English clergy who oppose the Reformation are the worst kind of self interested merchants. They import their unnecessary wares or ‘trysh trash’ from Rome, turn England’s religious houses into marketplaces and, in doing so, they damage both the spiritual and financial health of the commonwealth of England by dishonestly promising salvation in return for acts of faith or the contents of an individual’s purse. Like Chaucer’s Pardoner, papal agents at home and abroad offer spiritually and materially worthless goods, and have allowed material concerns to infect their own spirituality.

In 1548 (a statistical high point in the use of the term trifle, as shown in Graph 2 in the Introduction), the year after the publication of the second edition of the Marcourt translation, John Bale’s *Answere to a Papystycall Exhortacyon Pretendynge to Auoyde False Doctryne*, was published and continued to connect the Papist clergyman with the merchant. Mary Dove points out that in the same year Bale also named Wycliffe the ‘stella matutina’ (‘morning star’) of the Reformation in his *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum...Summarium*.¹⁵⁸ Bale’s *Answere* is presented as a dialogue between two characters – ‘The Papyste’ and ‘The Christiane’. Unsurprisingly, as it comes from the pen of a recognised evangelical, it is ‘The Christiane’ that is given the final word and the requisite vernacular rhetoric to utterly confound his opponent.

One episode is particularly useful: here ‘The Papyste’ denies a desire to convert others by attesting that the insufficiency of his ‘lernynge’ automatically bars him from evangelising. Instead he asserts that such behaviour is the resort of ‘heretykes’:

I wryte not thys intendynge to preche
 Neyther takynge vpon me any man to teche
 My lernynge is not mete
 But because vnder holy pretente
 We shuld not hyde these heretykes offence
 But treade it vnder our fete.¹⁵⁹

‘The Christiane’ refutes these assertions in no uncertain terms, saying:

Ye vtter soche trashe
 And pylde haberdashe
 As laye longe in your mynde

¹⁵⁸ Dove, *The First English Bible*, p.43.

¹⁵⁹ John Bale, *An Answere to a Papystycall Exhortacyon Pretendynge to Auoyde False Doctryne, Vnder That Colour to Maynteyne the Same* ([Antwerp: S. Mierdman, ca. 1548]), A.8^v. From EEBO.

But loke ye styll hyde
 All treason and pryde
 Of your olde popyshe kynde.¹⁶⁰

Once again the proponents of papal orthodoxy are being presented as merchants, in this case a haberdasher (a dealer in materials and items of clothing). As in the texts of Brinkelow, Joye and Marcourt, Bale's dialogue suggests that 'Papystes' deal in mercantile/ spiritual 'trashe'. However, despite the material and mercantile resonance of this word, it is used in this case to refer to speech – 'Ye utter soche trashe'. This suggests that the use of the mercantile term trash to highlight the lack of spiritual value in papal objects had become sufficiently established for it to be referenced in this way, making such speech material by identifying it as 'pylde haberdashe'.

Like a haberdasher, 'The Papyste' attempts to 'dress up' his argument to 'hyde' his 'popyshe' 'treason and pryde', but 'The Christiane' is able to unveil these deceptions. In the final sentence of the text – 'God saue the kynge' – Bale reiterates the treasonous threat presented by 'The Papyste', while also asserting the duty of 'The Christiane' to protect his monarch from the damaging effects of 'The Papyste's' 'trashe'.¹⁶¹ By describing 'The Papyste' as a merchant of 'pylde haberdashe', 'The Christiane' is naming his opponent as a seller of threadbare fabric, like the 'woluish grossers' found in the Marcourt translation who 'drawe money to them' with the help of, among other things, 'vestimentes...[and] clothinges', which they pretend to be woven through with spiritual value but they are, in fact, threadbare or 'pylde' of any such spiritual worth.

Connecting the papist-inclined English clergy with merchants of spiritually worthless wares resonates with an earlier tradition exemplified in Chaucer and the crimes of idolatry and simony; they set up false idols and sinfully traffic in sacred things, exploiting naive and desperate people. Even the threat of Purgatory was denounced by many Reformers as another form of false 'trysh trash' imported from Rome.

There are echoes of these anti-clerical controversies much later in the period. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (first performed in 1611), the peddler and fraudster Autolycus revels in the success of his deceptive trade:

¹⁶⁰ Bale, *An Answere*, A.8^v.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, B.2^v.

Ha, ha! What a fool honesty is and trust – his sworn brother – a very simple gentleman! I have sold all my *trumpery*; not a counterfeit stone, not a ribbon, glass, pomander, brooch, table-book, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoe-tie, bracelet, horn-ring to keep my pack from fasting. They throng who should buy first, as if my trinkets had been *hallowed*, and brought a *benediction* to the buyer; by which means I saw whose purse was best in picture; and what I saw, to my good use I remembered.¹⁶² [emphasis mine]

Like Chaucer's medieval Pardoner, Shakespeare's early modern peddler enthusiastically recounts his deceptive trading practices. While the Pardoner refers to his deceitful merchandise as 'gaude(s)', Autolycus calls his fraudulent wares 'trumpery', a word also used in Brinkelow's *Lamentacion* to refer to the superstitious papal practise of buying and selling pardons. This metaphor is supported by Autolycus' claim that his customers were so enthusiastic to buy his 'trinkets' that it was 'as if...[they] had been *hallowed* [sanctified or consecrated], and brought a *benediction* [spiritual blessing] to the buyer'. In this way he likens his merchandise to pardons and relics, which were associated with traditional papal rituals of worship and the purchasing of absolution: as such, he forms a mirror image of Chaucer's Pardoner, who treats his papal goods as mercantile commodities in an attempt to defraud his customers and feed his sinful greed. Evidently the lexical intermingling of the papal and the mercantile had become so established that Shakespeare, writing *The Winter's Tale* at the start of the seventeenth century (c.1609-1611), was able to invert the traditional use of these terms to present the mercantile peddler Autolycus describing his trade in papal terms. Just as the mercantile had been used to devalue the papal, now the papal devalues the mercantile.

As this chapter has shown, the Reformation generated new anxieties about spiritual value, and how these anxieties produced a new language for spiritual valuation that borrowed from medieval anti-clericalism and contemporary mercantilism. The development of these debates and the language in which they took place can be traced in the books written in English throughout this period, as I have shown. The texts of the 1530s and 40s explored in this chapter, which deploy the nouns 'trash' and 'trifle' and respond to the perceived threat of devaluing

¹⁶² William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2nd International student edn (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 4.4.584-592.

spiritual infection, are among the earliest examples in the lexicon that merged the mercantile with the spiritual. The way this merged lexicon was used and developed in these early decades, to refer to both material objects (relics, rosary beads, church plate and altar ornaments) and ideological ephemera (belief in purgatory and the efficacy of auricular confession) foreshadows the ways in which the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' were deployed in response to subsequent crises. This chapter's exploration of these early texts provides the foundation for the study of 'trash' and 'trifles' in the rest of the thesis. As stated in the Introduction, Mary Douglas explained that 'we shall not expect to understand other people's ideas of contagion, sacred or secular, until we have confronted our own'; by investigating these early uses of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle', in relation to the historical moment of anxiety (the Reformation) that they cluster around, this chapter has 'confronted' the use of 'trash' and 'trifles' in order to understand early modern England's anxieties about devaluing spiritual 'contagion'.

This chapter has shown that, by the midpoint of the sixteenth century, the merging of the mercantile and the spiritual in the terms 'trash' and 'trifles' was an established polemical device. The next chapter will investigate how the semantic range of 'trash' and 'trifle' could also be used in their original, mercantile sense in the economic and political debates of the later sixteenth century – the polemical deployment of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' was sufficiently established to make it suitable for this expansion in usage. Just as England had sought to shape an independent spiritual 'common weal' through the formation of the Church of England following the break with Rome, sixteenth century English writers like Sir Thomas Smith were attempting to carve out a place on the international stage by shaping a secure and affluent economic 'common weal' of England that was immune to foreign mercantile influences at home and abroad. Such fears generated debates over how to protect the treasure of the 'common weal' of England from a sudden and dangerous influx of foreign 'trash'.

Chapter Two

Endangering the Treasure of the Commonweal: Trash and Trifles in the English Marketplace

The English translation of Marcourt's *Booke of Marchauntes* (1547) intermingled mercantile and spiritual terminology in order to highlight the valuelessness of papal objects and traditions, referring to the Romish clergy as 'marchant[s]' and 'woluish grossers'.¹⁶³ Similarly, John Bale's *Answere to a Papystycall Exhoration* (1548), described the 'The Papyste's' pro-papal speech as 'trashe,/ And pylde habberdashe'.¹⁶⁴ Marcourt's text also listed the wares of those 'woluish grossers', in order to render the papal traditions of 'mariage, vestimentes, rasures, shauing, anointinges, clothinges, bulles, pardons, indulgences, remissions, bones other relykes and rogacions, expectyues, dispences, exemptions, sacramentes, and holi workes of god' as mere 'trysetrase' – spiritually valueless tools that these Romish hawkers utilised to 'meruelously well drawe money to them'.¹⁶⁵

However, the words in the semantic range of trash and trifles could also be deployed in a more familiar mercantile context from the middle of the sixteenth century. Just as the Reforming literature used mercantile terminology to respond to the (spiritual) value crisis that gripped the commonwealth as the Church of England was established, economic writers began to intercede in a value crisis that was both political and mercantile. They wished to shape a coherent English mercantile identity, strong enough to meet the demands of farther-reaching trading and attuned to the political necessity of enriching and safeguarding the 'commonweal' of England. In around 1549, two years after the publication of the English translation of Marcourt's text and a year after Bale's *Answere*, the scholar, diplomat and political theorist Sir Thomas Smith completed his manuscript *The Discourse of the Common Weale of this Realm of England*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Marcourt, *Booke of Marchauntes*, Bi^v.

¹⁶⁴ Bale, *An Answere*, A.8^v.

¹⁶⁵ Marcourt, *Booke of Marchauntes*, Bi^v.

¹⁶⁶ In 1581 the printed text entitled *A Compendious or Briefe Examination of Certayne Ordinary Complaints, of diuers of our country men in these our dayes Which Although They Are in Some Part Vniust [and] Friuolous, yet Are They All by Vvay of Dialogues Thoroughly Debated [and] Discussed*. By

The manuscript of *The Discourse* was written during the reign of Edward VI, but was prepared and published thirty-two years later, in dedication to Elizabeth I, after the author's death. It is appropriate, therefore, to examine the way in which Smith's argument is laid out or 'packaged' in both its forms, paying particular attention to points of similarity and difference between them. Like Bale, Smith chose to set down an argument concerning the danger to England posed by 'tryfles' in the form of a conversation. While the *Answer* was a dialogue between a 'Papyste' and a 'Christiane' highlighting the insidious threat of papal 'trashe' to the English Church, *The Discourse* is a conversation between five individuals – a Knight, a Merchantman, a Doctor, a Husbandman and a Craftsman – designed to raise awareness about the damaging effect of debased currency and imported mercantile 'tryfles' on the economic security of the 'commonweal' of England. In the aftermath of an attack on imported spiritual trash and trifles, and the papal 'merchants' who 'sell' them, Smith's text highlights the comparable threat of, similarly imported, mercantile 'tryfles'.

Smith takes ownership and responsibility for his text when he states that the *Discourse* is his 'poore and simple conceipte', yet within the same sentence he distances himself from the content by claiming that the subject matter had been from a 'communication a Knight told was betweene him & certayne other persons of late about this matter'.¹⁶⁷ Smith may also have hoped to protect himself by circulating his *Discourse* only in manuscript, thus limiting its readership, and by not signing his name to it. It also seems that Smith intended to control his readership in another respect, by carefully choosing to whom it was sent, since within the preface to the Yelverton MS he is confident enough to state that his

W.S. Gentleman, or *The Discourse of the Commonweal* was published. Despite this titular attribution to W.S. and the subsequent debate over its authorship by a number of editors and academics, the most likely author of the text is Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577). Indeed, a manuscript copy of this printed *Discourse*, which was created in around 1549, is held at the British Library as Add 48047 (Yelverton MS. 52) ff. 170-226b, and the catalogue attributes the authorship of this manuscript to Sir Thomas Smith. Max Beer explains that: 'The treatise was reprinted in 1751, 1808, 1813, 1876 by various publishers, one of whom thought to have discovered under the letters W.S. the name of William Shakespeare.' Additionally, Mary Dewar, who produced an edition of this text in 1969, under the title *A Discourse of the commonweal of this realm of England*, agrees that Sir Thomas Smith was the author of the 1549 manuscript. She asserts that the titular W.S. refers to Sir Thomas' nephew and heir William Smith, who had prepared the manuscript for publication after his uncle's death in 1577. [Max Beer, *Early British Economics: From the 13th to the Middle of the 18th Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.87 and Mary Dewar, 'The Authorship of the 'Discourse of the Commonweal'', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 19 (1966), 388-400, pp.397-398.]

¹⁶⁷ Smith, *Discourse of the Commonweal*, p.13.

Discourse 'is between us two to be weighed only and considered and not to be published abroad'¹⁶⁸. Evidently, Sir Thomas' wishes in this regard did not concern his nephew William as the latter set about preparing the text for publication in 1581.

As the heir of Sir Thomas Smith, in 1580 William took up residence at his uncle's former home, Hill Hall, which had been an important centre for learning during Sir Thomas' lifetime. William subsequently set about examining his uncle's manuscript writings, some of which he had revised just before his death in 1577.¹⁶⁹ Sir Thomas had been forced to retire from Court on account of his ill health in March 1576 (he was suffering from throat cancer), which enabled him to focus solely on his academic pursuits.¹⁷⁰ It was during this final period of productivity that Smith began the revision of his earlier manuscripts, which included the *Discourse*. Of all the alterations made to the *Discourse* between the manuscript of 1549 and the printed edition of 1581 one of the most significant, alongside the alteration to the dedicatory epistle signed by W.S., occurs in the 'Third Dialogue'. In the manuscript this features an extended discussion between the Doctor and the Knight over the problems of debasement and the potential issues that may arise out of attempting to restore the purity of the metal content within the currency; this is replaced in the printed edition with the Doctor's disagreement with the Knight's assertion that the restoration of the English coin 'to his former purity' has had no effect on the rising prices of goods.¹⁷¹ Dewar explains that this new addition referenced Elizabeth's 'coinage measures of 1560' and 'endeavoured to meet the possible objection that prices had continued to rise' during her reign.¹⁷² Evidently the measures had occurred recently enough for their effects to still be uncertain at the point when Smith began making revisions to his manuscripts. It would have been the revised version of the *Discourse* that William Smith discovered amongst his uncle's effects in 1580.

In 1549, 1576 and 1581 Sir Thomas and his nephew William produced texts

¹⁶⁸ Smith, *Discourse of the Commonweal*, pp.12-13.

¹⁶⁹ Dewar, 'The Authorship of the 'Discourse of the Commonweal'', pp.397-398.

¹⁷⁰ Ian W. Archer, "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004) Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Jan. 2008 [accessed 24 Dec. 2010] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25906>>.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *Discourse of the Commonweal*, p.143.

¹⁷² Dewar, 'The Authorship of the 'Discourse of the Commonweal'', p.398.

that were informed and influenced by shifting political situations and, as the graphs in the introduction to this thesis show, the texts produced by the Smiths appeared contemporaneously with peaks in the usage of the terms ‘trash’ and ‘trifle’ that are shown in Graph 2 and 3 – these peaks occurred in 1548 (trash and trifle), 1578 (trifle), 1579 (trash) and 1581 (trash and trifle). In each of its incarnations, *The Discourse of the Commonweal* responded to the economic pressures facing England; in the 1540s manuscript those pressures stemmed from a desire to address the threat posed by European trading to the wealth held in ‘common’ within England, while the 1580s print publication emerged as England was attempting to carve out a place in a growing global marketplace. This chapter explores the literary, economic and political contexts behind the creation of the manuscript and its subsequent publication: it will also show the influence that Smith’s manuscript had on ‘commonweal’ literature and English government policy over the next three decades.

Sir Thomas Smith in Context

Smith’s decision to structure his *Discourse* in the form of a conversation positions his text within an existing literary tradition. The staged conversation was a stylistic convention that Smith personally favoured, using it again in 1561 for his *Dialogue on the Queen’s Marriage* and in 1572 when writing on the Ardes, the land he wished to colonise in Ireland.¹⁷³ Additionally, the discourse or dialogue was an important form within humanist learning and writing during the early modern period. During the *Prohemium* (preface) Smith explains that the discursive form allows ‘Reasons [to] be made too and froe, as well for the matter intended as against it’ and by presenting it as a dialogue between representatives from ‘every state’ of society, he claims to have created a ‘perfect counsell’ within the fiction of his *Discourse*.

Smith’s fictional Doctor is keen, however, to privilege the need for learning and asserts that it is fitting that ‘the learned had sovereignty over the unlearned’; he argues that through learning a man may obtain the experiences and understanding

¹⁷³ Dewar, ‘The Authorship of the ‘Discourse of the Commonweal’’, pp.396-397.

of those before him, which in turn positions him to offer apt advice for the government of a community.¹⁷⁴ On the topic of governance, the Doctor utilises the metaphor of the ship to represent his community and asks: 'What Ship can bee longe saufe from wracke where euery man will take vpon him to bee a Pylate: what house well gouerned, where euery seruaunt will be a maister and a teacher.'¹⁷⁵ While each member of a 'commonweal' should be concerned with its welfare, as those aboard a ship are naturally concerned that it should sail safely, that concern is best served by their obedience to those set above them (be it their monarch or captain) – in short, the success of the 'commonweal' rests upon there being a 'perfect counsell' of educated governors and the governed. These learned councillors would, according to Smith, have the requisite ability to determine appropriate systems of spiritual and mercantile valuation in order to protect England from the debilitating effects of trash and trifles.

That he shared in the beliefs espoused by the Doctor is demonstrated by the fact that Smith also orchestrated gatherings where learned men were collected together to form a real 'perfect counsell'. The copious annotations made by Smith's protégé, Gabriel Harvey, in his copy of Livy's *History of Rome* recount some of the interactions he had with Sir Thomas Smith, his son (also Thomas) and their other associates, some of which occurred at Smith's home, Hill Hall. In one case, Harvey describes a debate he attended at the house in 1571. Harvey names the men present: in addition to Smith and his son there was the colonel in charge of suppressing the Desmond rebellion, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and the diplomat Walter Haddon.¹⁷⁶ These men were diplomats and men of action coming together with a professional 'reader' (Harvey) to navigate between law/morality and military action using the arguments put forward by the classical figures in Livy. Hill Hall was being used to practice debate, rhetorical style, and to gain greater understanding of the texts under examination, many of which dealt with the moral and practical implications of classical empire building.¹⁷⁷ Smith's plan for his own 'commonweal' was similarly colonial, with Ireland as the primary location in which to achieve that settlement. The classical examples of colonisation provided Smith

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, B3^r.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., C2^r.

¹⁷⁶ Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present*, 1990, 30-78, p.41.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.40.

with justifiable precedence for subduing the 'wild Irish' in the same way that the Romans had subdued the inhabitants of the lands they conquered.¹⁷⁸ The Roman colonisers had employed enslavement to subdue and profit from the native inhabitants of the lands they colonised and Smith intended that the English colonisers should do the same and strengthen the 'commonweal' by 'rear[ing] their colony on a basis of servile Irish labour.'¹⁷⁹ In later decades, Smith's arguments about the necessity of enacting the subjugation and settlement of Ireland would be reworked into the literature of the New World colonial project.

In another annotation, Harvey credits Smith and four other men as having influenced and guided his reading of Livy: the lawyer Henry Harvey, the scholar/writer Roger Ascham, the statesman Sir Walter Mildmay and the courtier/soldier Sir Philip Sidney.¹⁸⁰ Harvey thus provides the names of men who read, and thus possibly thought, like Smith. Perhaps they too were members of Smith's coterie that met at Hill Hall or people that Smith influenced and was influenced by. Certainly, most of these men shared Smith's interest in the colonisation of Ireland. As in the *Discourse*, men came together from different fields – doctors and knights – in a 'perfect counsell' that was designed to improve the 'commonweal'.

The ideology of the 'Commonwealth' or 'commonweal' was a nascent one when Smith began work on the *Discourse*; indeed, according to the Oxford English Dictionary the earliest recorded use of the word 'commonweal' was eighty years earlier in part of William Gregory's *Chronicle* (c.1469). In the case of Gregory's text the 'comyn wele' is something that belongs to the people, who may justifiably utilise insurgency to defend it. The *Chronicle* recounts the reasoning of the Kentish insurgents, who followed Wat Tyler in the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 and claimed to be acting for the good of 'the comyn wele of the realme of Ingelonde.'¹⁸¹ In this respect the origin of the word 'commonweal' and the earliest use of the words in the semantic range of trash – in the case of Smith's *Discourse*, specifically the word 'tryfles' – to denote the worthlessness are virtually contemporary. As a sense of the shared duty of each member of the 'commonweal' began to influence early modern

¹⁷⁸ David Beers Quinn, 'Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577) and the Beginnings of English Colonial Theory', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 89 (1945), 543-560, p.546.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.548.

¹⁸⁰ Jardine and Grafton, 'Studied for Action', p.55.

¹⁸¹ 'Common Weal/ Commonweal, n.', *OED Online* [accessed 28 December 2010]

England's political, economic and humanist thought, it is perhaps unsurprising that the language of the 'commonweal' also developed to present new ways to describe the issues affecting and threatening its prosperity. Through the formulation of the 'perfect counsell' the 'commonweal' of England would be able to sort the desirable and 'necessary' economic treasure from the potentially destructive and 'unnecessary' mercantile trifles. Smith's oppositional structure would influence and feature in the value debates for the rest of the century and beyond – mercantile goods were divided between 'necessary' treasure and 'unnecessary' trifles.

Smith also strove to promote the value of such 'perfect counsell' within the rest of the 'commonweal' of England. He saw it as the duty of the humanist scholar to remove themselves from the 'solitude of the Uniuersities' in order to place their expertise at the disposal of the state.¹⁸² Following an increase in 'social mobility' within early modern England, 'University men' of various classes had become the advisorial elite – a university education was the standard requirement for any man wishing to wield political power in England. Sir Thomas Smith was part of this 'polymathic' group: his skills as a humanist scholar, diplomat and political theorist combined with his zeal for the Protestant reforming effort to make him ripe for preferment during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I.

Smith explicitly references his own learning in the preface, in order to defend the 'bolde[ness]' of his suggestions within *The Discourse*: 'for as much as most of this matter contayneth Pollicy, or good gouernment of a commonweale, being a Member of Philosophy morale, wherein I haue somewhat studyed, I shall bee so bolde with my countreymen'.¹⁸³ However, it is not simply his expertise in the duties and responsibilities taught within moral philosophy that qualifies him to comment upon the government of the 'commonweal': when Smith identifies the realm as a 'commonweal' in his *Discourse* he implies that England's commercial

¹⁸² Smith, *A Compendious or Brieffe Examination*, C3r.

¹⁸³ Ibid., A2r. By describing himself as 'a Member of Philosophy morale', Smith refers to 'the branch of philosophy that deals with right and wrong conduct and with duty and responsibility (formerly sometimes including psychology and metaphysics); ethics.' ("moral philosophy, *n.*", *OED Online*. March 2013 [accessed 26 April 2013]) Smith's education has taught him how to conduct himself as an English humanist and shown him the 'duty' and 'responsibility' that he owes to his 'commonweal'.

identity should be a communal concern. Indeed, Smith seeks to further define and defend his intervention through the expression of his national identity:

yet knowing my selfe to bee a Member of the same Commonweale, and to further it by all the wayes that possibly I may: I cannot reckon and account my selfe a meere stranger to this matter, no more than a man that were in a Shippe, which being in daunger of wracke might say: that, because he is not (percase) the maister or Pylate of the same, the daunger thereof doth pertayne nothing at all to him.¹⁸⁴

Smith recognises that he, his fellow humanist scholars, and indeed all members of the 'commonweal' of England are affected by the state of their nation. As such, they should concern themselves with the 'furthering' of the same.

However, the somewhat plaintive tone Smith adopts in asserting his right to intervene and guide the course of the English 'commonweale' can be explained by the position in which he found himself in the late 1540s. In the early months of 1547, at the start of Edward VI's reign, Smith became attached to the household of Protector Somerset, before being made a clerk of the Privy Council in March of that year; he was subsequently appointed to the post of Secretary of State in April 1548 and knighted a year later.¹⁸⁵ Despite his rising prominence, Smith's conclusions about the causes of the ruinous inflation that had fuelled social unrest during the years of Somerset's protectorate, in particular the substantial role played by the debasement of the coinage in that unrest, placed Smith in opposition to Somerset.

In many ways Smith's manuscript can be read as a product of external economic and socio-political factors, which are referenced throughout the text, for example the rulings of the enclosure commissions of 1548 and 1549; the cloth taxes that were only enforced during the summer of 1549; as well as comments on the debasement, exportation and counterfeiting of English coin, which had been referenced in a proclamation of April 11th 1549.¹⁸⁶ However, Smith's personal circumstances are also a major factor in the date the *Discourse* was produced. Two months after obtaining his knighthood Smith's working relationship with Somerset had almost entirely broken down: following Protector Somerset's rejection of his pleas to cease the debasement of the coinage, Smith was removed from the

¹⁸⁴ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, A1^r.

¹⁸⁵ Ian W. Archer, 'Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Jan 2008 [accessed 4 Feb 2013]
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25906>>

¹⁸⁶ Smith, *Discourse of the Commonweal*, p.xix.

position of Secretary of State and when apparent illness forced him to return to Eton College (where he occupied the role of provost) Somerset commanded him to remain there.¹⁸⁷

As mentioned in the Introduction, Smith's *Discourse* asserted that 'euery man findeth himselfe greeued at this time' because of the economic crisis affecting each strata of English society, which he claimed had its roots in 'that basenesse of our Englishe Coyne, which happened in the later yeares of Kyng *Henry* the eyght.'¹⁸⁸ Craig Muldrew, in *The Economy of Obligation*, explains that 'money itself, and the use of money, is a system in which people place trust... The agreement over the value of gold and silver underpinned the credit system, but it was still only a means of measurement upon which a great edifice of interpersonal emotional trust was built up'.¹⁸⁹ The debasement of the coin threatened the trust that individuals (both at home and abroad) had in English coin.

The *Discourse's* Doctor propounds the notion that debasement, which had turned England's currency into valueless trash, was the cause of problems within the 'commonweal' because it was 'unnatural' for the amount of precious metals within a coin to fail to match the face value of that coin.¹⁹⁰ On this point, the Knight is in disagreement with the Doctor as he argues that the coin may be a symbol of a value amount – debased coins should be accepted as representative of a value amount and so accounted that value in truth; it was only distorted perception that caused the debased coin to be viewed as trash. However, the Doctor maintains that debasement is 'unnatural' and that the 'unnaturalness' of the practise continues to influence the reputation of the English currency for foreign traders, even though it has ended. He claims:

Our Englishe Coyne being supposed to be base, and of no such estimation in other countryes as within our owne Realme as for the most parte it hath bene before that it was restored by our noble Prince which nowe raygneth.¹⁹¹

The Doctor worries that without the revaluation of English coinage 'strangers' may look to exchange cheaper foreign wares or trifles for more expensive English ones: 'If they woulde looke but for our wares for theirs, thinke yee that they would not

¹⁸⁷ Dewar, 'The Authorship of the 'Discourse of the Commonweal'', p.389.

¹⁸⁸ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, C3^r.

¹⁸⁹ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, p.6.

¹⁹⁰ Dewar, 'The Authorship of the 'Discourse of the Commonweal'', p.392.

¹⁹¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D3^v.

study to bring to vs such wares or stuffe as should be best cheape with them, & most deere with vs.'¹⁹²

Muldrew offers context for Smith's distrust of the honesty of the 'stranger' merchants' fiscal intentions by highlighting the intermingling of 'credit, honesty and reputation' in early modern 'economic practices and discourse'.¹⁹³ However, perceptions of economic trust and value were being complicated by the expanding horizons of the global marketplace during the sixteenth century; as Muldrew explains, '[t]he market was something which linked strangers through hundreds of thousands of different transactions in increasingly lengthy chains of obligation' – as the market expanded the bonds of economic trust were placed under greater strain.¹⁹⁴ This global strain was compounded in England 'from the 1520's, [as] the economy once again began to expand because of a renewed population growth'; in this economic climate value was not intrinsic, but rather tied to scarcity.¹⁹⁵

While Marcourt's listing highlighted the collective spiritual worthlessness of papal traditions, Smith emphasises his economic concerns by listing both valuable ('necessary') and worthless ('unnecessary') materials and commodities that were being imported into England. Smith's Doctor lists the foreign goods imported by 'strangers' which he classifies as 'necessary' to prevent the English people living 'grosly' or 'barbarously'.¹⁹⁶ He also goes on to divide that list up, showing that certain things are 'necessary' for different social groupings. The Husbandman's livelihood depends upon imports of 'Iron, Salt, Tarre, Pitch', on his wool being turned into 'Flaxe', fabric or clothing by another party and upon his ability to afford 'Linnen, & Wollen, & Leather' to clothe himself as he goes about his work.¹⁹⁷ The Gentleman, on the other hand, has a larger list of goods that were deemed 'necessary' for him to display his status and to fulfil the martial and social duties that were attached to his rank. He 'must buy Wynes, Spices, Silkes, Armour, Glasse to glase his house wythall: Iron also for Tooles, Weapons, and other Instruments necessary: as Salt, Oyles, & many other diuerse thinges'.¹⁹⁸ Although iron and salt

¹⁹² Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D4^v.

¹⁹³ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, pp.2-3.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.15.

¹⁹⁶ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D4^r.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., D3^v.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., D3^v-D4^r.

were materials that were produced in England, for the amount required England's yield was 'not halfe sufficient for the same', and England did not have any amount of 'Oyles, Tarre, Pitch, & Rozyn'.¹⁹⁹ The Doctor values these goods as 'necessary' imports to ensure the continuation of England's livelihoods. As mentioned in the Introduction, the imports that the Doctor classifies as 'necessary' for the continuation of an appropriate quality of lifestyle for the social elite is particularly interesting. These 'luxury' items, 'Wynes, Spices, & Silkes', commodities that other pamphleteers and polemicists might classify as 'trash' or 'trifles', are required for the civilised living expected of those of a certain rank.²⁰⁰

Alongside these valued 'necessaries', the *Discourse* also lists examples of imports that are 'unnecessary', valueless 'tryfles'. When the Doctor describes these 'trifles' he defines them as items that 'comes hether from beyond the sea, that we myghte eyther cleane spare or els make them within our realme'.²⁰¹ Rather than allowing English materials to be exported to foreign lands, where they are manufactured into commodities that are then re-imported and resold in the English market, the *Discourse* argues that goods made in England, from English materials, should be prohibited from being exported, finished and re-imported.²⁰² The Doctor proceeds to list examples of these types of goods that, in the manuscript, reads:

Of the which sorte I meane glasses aswell lookinge drinkeinge as to glase windowes, Dyalls, tables, cardes, balles, puppettes, pennes, inkehornes, toothpicks, gloves, knives, daggers, powches, broches, aglettes, buttons of

¹⁹⁹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D4^r.

²⁰⁰ Muldrew explains that despite the fact that 'the classical notion of *luxury* as a degenerative factor remained dominant throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...[a] distinction was commonly made between the necessities such as food, clothing and shelter, whose production and consumption was required for life, useful goods which made life more comfortable and 'commodious'; and luxuries, which could be interpreted as an expression of earned wealth, but more often of dangerously overarching ambition and greed.' Although Sir Thomas Smith's *Discourse* described 'the increase in consumption of luxury goods in London...This picture was almost certainly somewhat exaggerated, as Smith's purpose was to prevent treasure from being exported to pay for foreign luxuries, and the goods he mentioned for sale were expensive specialist items consumed by a very few.' [Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, pp.17-18]

²⁰¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G1^r.

²⁰² Regarding this process of finishing and reimporting wares, Derek Keene explains that, 'London paid for its imports with exports of white, unfinished woolen cloths...That the cloth was exported unfinished demonstrated not the inherent technological backwardness of London, but rather the complementary relationship with Antwerp...London was as yet too remote from the prime centers of demand to compete on those terms: its remoteness was to be measured less in physical distance than in its access to information flows and networks of exchange.' [Derek Keene, 'Material London in Time and Space', *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 55-74, p.63]

silke and silver, earthen pottes, pinnes and pointes, hawkes belles, paper both white and brown and a thousand like things.²⁰³

Although Smith's 'tryfles' are listed to warn against an explicitly economic threat posed by foreign imports, many of the items, particularly the 'gloves... broches, aglettes, buttons of silke and silver... pinnes and pointes', are also ornaments that have been 'made of mennes handes'. They are, therefore, similar to the objects that Queen Katherine Parr had previously claimed could lead people – particularly women, who were frequently on the receiving end of complaints about excess in dress – into forsaking 'the spirituall honoring of the true liuyng god' by encouraging them to make 'great ydol[s] of [them] selfe[s]'.²⁰⁴ Queen Katherine's 'tryfles', Bale's 'pylde habberdashe' and Marcourt's 'trysetrase' intermingle mercantile terminologies into their discourse of spiritual valuation; conversely, Smith's use of the word 'tryfles' to describe mercantile valuelessness also contains the threat of spiritual debasement. Smith's assertions about excess in dress borders upon the puritanical; his list of 'tryfles' are fashion items for display and buying into them would be both economically dangerous or wasteful and a spiritually sinful act of vanity. In this way, concerns over spiritual 'trishtrash' are woven into Smith's *Discourse*, since the mercantile 'tryfles' that threaten the economic 'commonweal' also inspire the pride and vanity that jeopardised the spiritual wealth of a Reformed and iconoclastic England.

Muldrew typifies the sixteenth century as a period of '[i]ncreasing consumption and investment in the expansion of production' in England, due to 'an appreciation for consumer goods, because wealth was something which needed to be expressed socially through a life-style which differentiated elites and the successful from those of lesser resources', which resulted in increasing household indebtedness that, in turn, created a 'growing economic instability' by generating 'financial failure' through irresolvable debt demands.²⁰⁵ Indeed, '[a]lmost all buying and selling involved credit of one form or another' and '[i]nterest was always charged

²⁰³ Smith, Manuscript *Discourse*. The list in the 1581 published version of *The Discourse* contains many of the same objects, in a different order: 'drynking and looking glasses, paynted clothes, perfumed gloues, daggers, kniues, pinnes, pointes, aglets buttons, and a thousande other thinges of like sort.' (Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, M4^r.)

²⁰⁴ Parr, *The Lamentacion*, A4^r.

²⁰⁵ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, pp.16-17.

on bonds because there was a great demand for such a secure form of credit.’²⁰⁶ Thus, the very ‘tryfles’ that Smith was reacting against were responsible for driving the consumer demand that led to indebtedness and, potentially, drove people into the path of illegal and immoral usurers.²⁰⁷ Following Aristotle’s claim that the sterility of money meant that money ‘could not beget itself and therefore usury [like trash and trifles] was not useful’ to the commonwealth.²⁰⁸ Just as Smith decried the unnatural ‘trashing’ of the English coinage, the practice of usury was viewed as a sinful and similarly unnatural attempt to breed money.²⁰⁹ Certainly, the monarchs that Smith served were keen to act against usury; in 1571, seeing that her brother’s total ban on lending at interest had led to a situation where usury ‘hathe much more exceedingly abounded, to the utter undoing of many Gentlemen Marchauntes Occupiers and other, and to the importable Hurte of the Common wealth’, Elizabeth revived her father’s 1545 Act that limited interest to 10 percent.²¹⁰

The year after the revival of this act, in 1572, Thomas Wilson’s *Discourse Vppon Vsurye* asserts that the desire for ‘transitorie trashe’, which motivated the practice of usury, endangered an individual’s store of ‘eternal treasure’.²¹¹ Later in the

²⁰⁶ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, p. 95; 113.

²⁰⁷ Regarding the position of the Church on the practise of usury, David W. Jones explains that ‘the Church officially changed its position on the morality of lending money at interest at the Fifth Lateran Council (A.D. 1512-17)... The pontificate of Leo X, who signed the bull allowing for usury, widely is regarded as the apex of the secularization and moral degeneracy of the medieval church... it was this shift in thought that prompted Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the leaders of the Anabaptist movement to address the morality of lending money at interest. Indeed, on account of the statements produced by the Fifth Lateran Council, which ended a few months before Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the chapel door in Wittenberg, the Protestant reformers could not help but address the morality of the practice of usury.’ [David W. Jones, *Reforming the Morality of Usury: A Study of Differences That Separated the Protestant Reformers* (Dallas ; Oxford: University Press of America, 2004), pp.34-36]

²⁰⁸ Charles R. Geisst, *Beggar Thy Neighbor: A History of Usury and Debt* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p.3.

²⁰⁹ Geisst explains that ‘[a]s more ideas circulated on interest and usury, it became clear that attitudes were in a state of flux. The use of money carried with it more than one potential sin. In addition to usury, debasement of coin, monopoly, and simony were now included. Devaluation of money by princes and the selling of church offices became the hot topics of the day. Simony would become one of the pivotal issues of the Reformation and while usury remained in the limelight as always, it was not quite the burning issue it had been in the time of Aquinas.’ [Geisst, *Beggar Thy Neighbor*, p.58]

²¹⁰ Lloyd Edward Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p.2.

²¹¹ Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse Vppon Vsurye by Vvaye of Dialogue and Oracions, for the Better Varietye, and More Delite of All Those, That Shall Reade Thys Treatise. By Thomas Wilson, Doctor of the Ciuill Lawes, One of the Masters of Her Maiesties Honorable Courte of Requestes. Seene & Allowed,*

decade, Phillip Caesar's *General Discourse against the Damnable Sect of Vsurers* (1578) also warns against allowing the desire for 'transitorie trashe to pollute your soules, and your selues to subiecte to the curse of God' by turning to usury.²¹² In addition to the connection between usury and the trash and trifles that threatened to inspire its practice, all three terms were also focus of contention in early modern England. As with the terms 'trash' and 'trifles', the significance and usage of 'usury' was disputed; David Hawkes explains that '[t]he people of Renaissance England unanimously believed that usury was evil', nevertheless, '[t]hey certainly differed as to the definition of usury, and they quarreled about whether limited usury should be permitted. Some of them allowed that usury was a regrettable necessity in a market society.'²¹³

The Discourse also contains warnings about the impact of the 'stranger' merchants' trading practices, whose importation of foreign 'tryfles' into the 'commonweal' threatened to destabilise England's economic security. These concerns were still very much in evidence in 1559, ten years after Smith penned his *Discourse*, in the decision to title an inventory of imports arriving in London, "The Particular value of certain necessary and unnecessary Wares brought into the Port of London in the second year of the Queen Majesty's reign, the overquantity whereof most lamentably spoileth the realm yearly."²¹⁴ Certainly, the years in which Smith and the inventory maker worked were periods of significant economic change within England; Muldrew explains that 1550 and 'the 30 years after this date were the most intensely *concentrated* period of economic growth before the late eighteenth century...[with] more immediate and far reaching social

according to the *Queenes Maiesties Iniunctions* (Londini: In ædibus Rychardi Tottelli, 1572), CCv. From JISC Historical Texts.

²¹² Philipp Caesar, *A General Discourse against the Damnable Sect of Vsurers Grounded Vppon the Vvorde of God, and Confirmed by the Auctoritie of Doctors Both Auncient, and Newe; Necessarye for All Tymes, but Most Profitable for These Later Daies, in Which, Charitie Being Banished, Couetousnes Hath Gotten the Vpper Hande. VVhereunto Is Annexed Another Godlie Treatise Concernyng the Lawfull vse of Ritches. Seene and Allowed Accordyng to Her Maiesties Iniunctions* (Imprinted at London: By Iohn Kyngston for Andrevv Maunsell in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the Parret, 1578), I.iii. From JISC Historical Texts.

²¹³ David Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England*, 1st ed.. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.2. Kermode also highlights the conflicted position occupied by the term usury by explaining that, in early modern England, the perceived "unnaturalness" of 'breeding' barren metal was debated', the concept of there being 'different 'degrees' of usury' was proposed, while others asserted 'the necessity of some form of credit to enable trade and economically useful activity' that would allow England to keep up with 'increasingly sophisticated mercantilist competition from the continent.' [Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.3.]

²¹⁴ Thirsk, *Economic Policy*, Appendix 1, pp.182-185.

effects than any change before industrialization [which] were primarily felt in the way exchange relations became more problematic.’²¹⁵

In *Merchants and Revolution*, Brenner states that, ‘[d]uring the early 1550s, both national and London cloth exports dropped off drastically’ and remained diminished ‘during the subsequent half century.’²¹⁶ However, contrary to ‘the traditional interpretation of Tudor-Stuart commercial change’, which asserted that the ‘short-time crises or the long-term relative stagnation of cloth exports of the second half of the sixteenth century impelled a search for new cloth markets’ for English wares, ‘[t]he fact is that every one of the new trades with southern and eastern areas founded in the half century or so after 1550 *concentrated from the very start on imports.*’²¹⁷ Thus, the anxiety evident in Smith’s *Discourse* and the inventory’s title is borne out by the contemporary mercantile landscape; England’s export market was being eclipsed by imports from overseas. England’s ‘peripheral position within the European economy’ compounded these concerns.²¹⁸ Derek Keene explains that, at the start of the sixteenth century, the nation’s wealth was recognisable and ‘above all visible in the windows of goldsmiths’ shops’ of London, however that ‘wealth was derived from its distributive trade and from its engrossing of the export of English woollen cloths (woven in provincial districts), which it transmitted in unfinished form to the expanding and sophisticated markets of the Low Countries’.²¹⁹ Wealth created in this way was precarious, since it ‘rested on a narrow base’, equally the imports ‘were perceived as undermining

²¹⁵ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, pp.20-21. In these pages Muldrew also details the shifting circumstances of English trading in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; he comments that the real rise was in imports into, rather than exports out of, England: ‘While exports of cloth did not begin to expand until after 1630, when the lighter new draperies became popular in overseas markets, imports into England grew quite dramatically. The tonnage of English shipping rose from 50,000 tons in 1572 to 115,000 in 1629, and by the later date there were more than 145 ships of over 200 tons; previously there had just been 14. In 1557 only some 282,016 lb of sugar were being shipped into London; by 1595 this had risen to over 1 million lb. Between 1563 and 1620 the amount of wine, currants, raisins and spices imported into London also increased over five fold, and by the mid-1590s over 1 million lb of currants were being imported into London alone from the Levant. This figure rose again to between 3 and 5 million lb by 1620, or almost 1 lb per person. Imports of fresh fruit also rose dramatically. In 1581 21,000 oranges and lemons reached Norwich in time for Bartholomew Fair, and possibly over 1000 tons of foreign fruit, spices and groceries were being shipped to East Anglia each year by the 1590s. The popularity of foreign groceries is shown by the fact that this represents 7-8.5 lbs per person in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. In 1660 200,000-300,000 lb of peppercorns were being imported to London each year, or about 6 oz per household in England.’

²¹⁶ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp.6-7..

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.4; 6-7; 11.

²¹⁸ Keene, ‘Material London in Time and Space’, p.60.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

native industry, although from the fourteenth century onward, they seem to have made available to English consumers a wider range of personal and household items, and at lower prices than could be achieved by English workshops.²²⁰

It seems that the potential remedies that Smith offered for these concerns, including cutting England off from foreign trade or charging foreign merchants prohibitively high prices for English goods, were either not heeded or were ineffective. Smith's Doctor presents the example of the action taken by the inhabitants of the haven town of Carmarthen who, when expecting a ship from England bringing corn found instead that the ship was 'Laden with Appells', refused to allow the substituted goods to be sold there.²²¹ These goods remained aboard the ship 'without sale or vent' and therefore were left to spoil and be 'lost' to the merchant.²²² The bailiff of the port explained to the merchant that his goods had been allowed to spoil because Carmarthen (and by implication all of Wales) will not suffer 'the best wares they had in the countrey, as Fryzes, brode Clothes, & wooll' to be taken from them as exports, while all that is imported in return are goods that they deem 'unnecessary' because they 'should be spent & wasted in lesse then a weeke.'²²³ Their message is that only necessary goods, 'whereof the countrey hath neede' will be welcomed into the port.²²⁴

While the example of Carmarthen is an extreme one, the Doctor does set down proofs that foreign merchants may be similarly persuaded to obey trading legislation as certain English goods, like 'cloth, Leather, Biere, tallow, butter, cheese, pewter vessell', were 'necessities' that were valued as such abroad, and foreign merchants would therefore wish to acquire them from England.²²⁵ On the other hand, according to the Doctor, foreign merchants imported goods that were 'more to serue pleasure then necessity' ('tables, Cardes, perfumed Gloues, Glasses, gally Pots, Dyails, Orenge, Pippens, and Cheries'), but chiefly 'wynes, silkes, spices, yron, and Salt' – these last examples, previously described as 'necessities' for civilised living, are now seen as 'commodities [that] might be better spared of

²²⁰ Keene, 'Material London in Time and Space', p.60.

²²¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G3^r.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

vs'.²²⁶ The primary factor that differentiates 'necessities' from 'tryfles' in Smith's *Discourse* appears to be the foreign, imported status of the latter.

However, Smith also presents, through the Doctor, the impossibility and even sinfulness of attempting to live and trade separately from other nations or setting unfair rates for foreign traders. The Doctor explains that it is against God's will to do so, as He has made each nation unable to live without trading with other nations: 'here we would do as though we had neede of no other countrey on earth, but to liue all of our selues...wee could not liue wythoute the commodities of others.'²²⁷ Nevertheless, the Doctor maintains that this exchange of commodities, which 'God hath ordeyned' should be monitored and controlled, to ensure that 'wee buy no more of straungers then we do sell them'.²²⁸ Specifically, this relates to financial value rather than quantity; it is seen as necessary to ensure that the worth of imported goods should have equivalence with those being exported. It is up to the members of the Protestant English 'commonweal' to guard against the spiritual and mercantile corruption of foreign merchants and a dynamic in which those merchants treat their English trading partners 'as men doe litle Children, geeue them an appell for the best Jewell that they haue about them. And thus wee are empouerished of our treasure, & chiefe commodity, and cannot perceiue it, such is the finenesse of straungers wits and the grosenes of ours.'²²⁹ In expressing these fears Smith's *Discourse* acknowledges the gullibility of the English, which leaves them vulnerable to exploitation; this gullibility and the fear created by it may have been encouraged by an acute awareness within the English populace of their peripheral presence in relation to more established global trading networks. For Thomas Pritchard, when writing *The Schoole of Honest and Vertuous Lyfe* (1579), 'lust[ing] after transitorie trash' was inherently immature, since it was symptomatic of 'the vigor and feruency of youthfull Adosescencie' that resulted in a naïve vulnerability that could be exploited by more mature and developed mercantile communities.²³⁰ This sense of how profit might be generated by the

²²⁶ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G3^r.

²²⁷ Ibid., F4^r.

²²⁸ Ibid., F4^r- G1^r.

²²⁹ Ibid., G3^v.

²³⁰ Thomas Pritchard, *The Schoole of Honest and Vertuous Lyfe Profitable and Necessary for All Estates and Degrees, to Be Trayned in: But (cheefely) for the Pettie Schollers, the Yonger Sorte, of Both Kindes; Bee They Men or Women. by T.P. Also, a Laudable and Learned Discourse, of the Worthynesse of Honorable Wedlocke, Written in the Behalfe of All (aswell) Maydes as Wydowes, (generally) for*

exploitation of the gullible would later play an important part in England's global trading policy and dealings with the inhabitants of the New World, the focus of the next chapter.

The religious impetus for trade between nations, when placed alongside the secular and political demands of the early modern period, fuelled a drive among analysts like Smith to shape an effective trading policy for the defence and profit of the 'commonweal'. The Knight reminds the Doctor that international trade is affected by international political policy and he asserts that the 'leagues' regarding trade that have been formed between England's monarch and foreign princes must be upheld in order to avoid disputes between nations.²³¹ The Doctor adopts a somewhat cavalier approach to the Knight's concerns about possible military action being taken by foreign princes, saying: 'when wee enter any league the same is ment to be for our weale, and not for our hinderaunce, wherefore that league would not be esteemed that might hinder our commonweale.'²³²

The 'balance of trade' must be maintained, the ratio of imports to exports should be equal at all times, just as the quantities of commodities within the realm should be balanced to ensure that there is neither a deficit nor a glut of anything. It was particularly important to ensure that English trading would not lead to 'unnecessary' goods outnumbering 'necessary' ones within the 'commonweal'. If home grown and manufactured wares should be produced in too high a quantity it is preferable to export or exchange the glut for items lacked by the realm, rather than allow them to spoil – over-produced and/or perishable wares should be traded with those that last or serve an immediate purpose for England. While various remedies for the 'grief' experienced in England are presented in the text, it is the *Discourse's* final and Third Dialogue that is wholly geared to remedying the current 'dearth' in England. In this final section it is the Doctor (once again) who takes the lead, reminding the rest of the group of all the 'griefs' they had previously identified before proceeding to offer his solutions.

Their Singuler Instruction, to Choose Them Vertuous and Honest Husbandes: But (most Specialy) Sent Writte[n] as a Iewell Vnto a Worthy Gentlewoman, in the Time of Her Widowhood, to Direct & Guide Her in the New Election of Her Seconde Husband. By Her Approoued Freend and Kinseman. I.R. (Imprinted at London: By William How for Richard Iohnes, and are to be solde at his shop ouer against S. Sepulchers Church without Newgate, 1579), pp.23-24. From JISC Historical Texts.

²³¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G2^v.

²³² Ibid., G3^r.

The damage and decay of all aspects of the English 'Commonwealth' was thought to be a consequence of a common desire for 'luxury' or 'unnecessary' foreign imports: the Doctor's solution is to devise some way to avoid such a quantity entering the Realm. He suggests a concerted attempt to encourage the production of these desired goods within England. He is particularly strident on the issue of importation for sale of goods fabricated from English materials; unlike the importation of foreign 'tryfles', which he would see diminished but not necessarily ceased altogether, he calls for the utter abolition of the practise of re-importing of English materials within commodities that have been made abroad. Indeed, he 'would that nothing made of oure commodities, as wolles felles, and tinne, such be brought from beyond the sea to be solde here: but that all those should be wrought within this realme.'²³³

The Doctor provides a list of suggestions for commodities that might be produced in England:

all kinde of Cloth, & Kersey: Worsteds, Couerlets, & Carpets of Tapestry: Caps, knit Sleues, Hosen, Peticotes, and Hattes: Then Paper both white and browne, parchment, velam, and all kinde of Leather ware, as gloues, poyntes, gyrdles, skins for Jerkins: and of tinne all maner of vessell, and also all kinde of glasses, and earthen pots, tennice balles, cardes, tables, & chesses, since we will needes haue such things: And Daggers, kniues, hammers, sawes, chesells, axes & such things made of yron.²³⁴

The above list groups together goods that Smith had previously separated as 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' items and presents them as things that should be manufactured in England. This implies that it is not their 'unnecessary' quality that makes them dangerous to the 'commonweal'; instead it is their imported or foreign nature that has rendered them as suspect 'tryfles'. For Smith, 'tryfles' were implicitly foreign, while the same goods, if they were indigenous to England, were natural and therefore 'necessary'.

The Doctor also finds it necessary to classify the occupations practised in England, much as he sees the value of demarcating imported goods as 'necessary' or 'unnecessary', as 'treasures' or 'trifles'. He identifies three grades of occupation, which he groups according to the worth of their activity to the Realm of England. He defines the first group as those 'that carrieth out the treasure', making them

²³³ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, M4r.

²³⁴ Ibid., M4v.

both the least valuable and the most damaging to the 'commonweal'.²³⁵ He names 'Vintners, Milleners, haberdashers, these galley men, Mercers, Fuslian Sellers, Grocers, & Potheccaries' as being within this group because they bring in foreign made 'trifles' and leave with England's 'treasure', which may refer to either coin, commodity or both.²³⁶ The second group is made up of occupations, whose focus of business is solely within England, such as 'Uyctaylers, Inholders, Bouchers, Bakers, Brewers, Taylors, Cordwinders, Sadlers, Carpenters, Joyners, Masons, Blacke Smythes, Turners, & Hoopers' and this group is judged to be neither profitable nor damaging to the 'commonweal'.²³⁷ They do not bring any 'treasure' into England but they 'carrieth none forth'.²³⁸ The third group is also the most profitable as it is the one that 'bringeth in treasure to the countrey', which makes this the collection of occupations whose practise should be encouraged and increased among Englishmen; this group is made up of 'clothiers, cappers, worstedmakers, Pewterers [and] Tanners', whose goods, which are made from English materials, are sold both within England and exported for sale abroad.²³⁹

Through classifying the occupations practised in England, separating those that are profitable to the 'commonweal' from those that are not, the Doctor shows the beneficial quality of occupations that work (preferably English) materials within England into commodities that are marketable at home and abroad. This classification functions to place the people within England on a scale of valuation; it identifies the worth, or otherwise, that they represent to their 'commonweal'. For Smith, an individual's value to the 'commonweal' is defined by the goods they provide: by valuing them in this way Smith commodifies them and their occupations. *The Discourse* presents the English 'commonweal' as a collection of economic units that are either 'necessary' (treasure-adding) or 'unnecessary' (trifle-bringing).

As well as praising those 'necessary' occupations already practised in England Smith also promotes greater diversity in those occupations. The example of Venice is presented: it is described as 'that moste flourishing citie at these daies of al *Europe*', which is in part ascribed to their practise of discovering the best

²³⁵ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, M4^v.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., M4^v-N1^r.

²³⁸ Ibid., N1^r.

²³⁹ Ibid.

craftsmen from elsewhere and finding ways to 'allure him to dwell in their citye'.²⁴⁰ The Doctor advances the Venetian example as something to be learnt from or copied in England, as he states that, 'it is a wonder to see what a deale of Money one good occupyer doth brynge into a towne, though he himself doth not gains to his owne commoditye but a poore lyuing.'²⁴¹

In addition to the fact that the English have not sought out the 'stranger' craftsmen in the way that Venice had, such diversity is not already in place in the Realm because foreign craftsmen are prevented from becoming 'freemen'. Therefore, the Doctor recommends a change in England's legislative policy to allow 'freedoms' to be granted to skilled foreign craftsmen in order to motivate such individuals to settle in England and promote their occupations. This recommendation had a profound impact on English government policy – Laura Hunt Yungblut explains that, in 1574 the Council, with Cecil at the helm, undertook the transplantation of foreign communities 'from overcrowded port areas such as Sandwich into less crowded areas'.²⁴² According to Yungblut:

This was not just a simple policy for the relief of overcrowding. The authorities paid careful attention to the nationality, the trades, and the churches, and to the room available at the intended point of relocation. In the relocation from Sandwich to Canterbury...Cecil and others of the Council recognized very early the positive role certain aliens could play in a long-term policy designed to reduce England's dependence on imported material.²⁴³

Cecil and his fellow councillors had shown the practical application of Smith's theories by turning them into government policy by 1574. There is a strong case that Smith had intended this all along. Although his time at Eton College, where Protector Somerset had demanded Smith remain in 1549, would have given Smith the time required to study and compile the *Discourse*, he no doubt felt divorced from the social and economic changes that he saw compromising the

²⁴⁰ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, N1^r. It is worth noting the Venice occupied a complex and contradictory space within the early modern English imagination; Neil MacGregor explains that '[b]eneath the admiration for the watery city, there was the suspicion of corruption, dangerous sensuality and, like the rest of Italy, poison.' Perhaps, in aspiring to the Venetian economic example, Smith hoped to avoid the corruption that came with it, or maybe he felt that it was an acceptable price to pay for the fiscal rewards that it would bring to the 'commonweal' of England. (*Shakespeare's Restless World* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), p.173.)

²⁴¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, N1^r.

²⁴² Laura Hunt Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us: Policies, Perceptions, and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.89.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.89-90.

Commonwealth. At this time of his political paralysis, with Protector Somerset ignoring his recommendations, he wrote to Cecil (the man who had replaced him as Secretary to the king) and it is wholly possible that the 'between us two' of the preface signals that the *Discourse* is a communication from Smith to Cecil.²⁴⁴

Smith adds a marginal notation alongside his statement that he 'cannot reckon and account my selfe a meere stranger to this matter', asserting that 'No man is a straunger to the commonweale he is in'.²⁴⁵ In this context of his arguments, this is a richly ambiguous statement. Being 'in' a 'commonweal' may simply refer to having been born 'in' it, so that irrespective of an individual's current location their membership of the 'commonweal' of their birth is immutable.²⁴⁶ However, it is also possible to read this as a reclassification of the position or identity of the foreign 'stranger' in England: in this case being 'in' a 'commonweal' would relate solely to a person's physical location. The implication is that the act of setting foot on foreign soil 'naturalises' an individual, which would run completely counter to the belief (or perhaps desire/concern) that national identity is fixed by birth and/or parental influence. What is clear is that Smith's *Discourse* views every man as being bound into the economic web of the 'commonweal' in which they reside.

Here and elsewhere *The Discourse* shows that those foreigners entering England did not pose the economic or political threat commonly associated with 'strangers' in the realm – instead their presence in England requires their care of its preservation. Concerns over nationality and patriotic loyalty are here giving way to economics. Just as *The Discourse* had divided the professions within the English 'commonweal' according to their respective worth, here men are increasingly being seen, not as members of a given nation, but as economic units acting in self interested ways. Indeed, the *Discourse* frequently views the 'stranger' merchant with distrust, as someone to be constantly monitored and checked with legislation. To solve the problem of 'dearth' within their 'commonweal', Smith's Knight and Husbandman determine that landowners and farmers must consent to lower the cost of both rents and farmed products. It is the threat of the 'stranger' merchant that prevents the plan from being workable; the Husbandman is quick to add the caveat 'If I had the price of euery thing that I must pay for besides, likewise

²⁴⁴ Smith, *Discourse of the Commonweal*, p.xxiv.

²⁴⁵ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, A1^r.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

brought downe, I could be content: els not.'²⁴⁷

The fundamental problem with the English collectively agreeing to, or even legislating to enforce, a drop in price for both land and goods, relates to how far its efficacy might reach – such promises and legislation need to take into account the trading practises of foreign merchants or 'strangers'. In this respect the Doctor begins to question whether the strangers trading in England could chose to ignore legislation regarding price drops as they would not be bound to obey the same rules as the English. The Doctor presents his concern that if foreign merchants ignored the legislation then England would be further impoverished, while foreign merchants and states were enriched since the 'strangers' would benefit from the low price of the English goods and continue to charge high prices for their own wares. Not only would the 'strangers' financially impoverish England but, with an increased ability to afford more of England's merchandise, they would also make them materially poorer. The only way in which this may be avoided, according to the Doctor, would be to charge higher prices to the 'strangers' when they buy English goods, in order to ensure that England's 'Treasure' and 'commodities' were not drained by the 'strangers' and that any new pricing legislation should not be responsible for 'a greate enriching of other countreyes, and impouerishinge of our owne'.²⁴⁸ The last sentence is particularly interesting because it acknowledges that, for better or worse, England now acts within a global trading economy. *The Discourse* oscillates between an isolationist desire to totally prohibit the importation of all foreign 'tryfles' and a protectionist approach that saw this importation as a 'necessary' danger. Throughout Smith's text an older English trading policy is supplanted by new policy drives that recognised the needful benefits of engaging with the thriving world of European trade.

The Doctor also highlights the vulnerability of a debased currency to counterfeiting by 'strangers' trading with the Realm. Through lowering the amount of precious metal within England's coinage, debasement allowed the production of counterfeit to become a cheaper alternative when trading with England – as the Doctor explains, 'straungers may aforde that Coine good cheape, for they make it them selues, and the Stuffe is good cheape that they make it of, and so they will

²⁴⁷ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D2^v.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., D3^r.

geeue thereof for our sayde commodities as much as yee will aske.'²⁴⁹ This counterfeit coin was valueless trash that may be exchanged for England's 'necessary' commodities, the 'Wooles, felles, Cheese, butter, Cloth, Tinne, and Ledde', in greater quantities than previously experienced, since that counterfeit coin was 'brought ouer in heapes' and 'esteemed heere as siluer'.²⁵⁰ As such, not only would England's currency be flooded with a glut of base and counterfeit money, which would further devalue that currency, but in doing so the 'strangers' – who are assumed to be consistently immoral – 'may exhaust our chiefe commodities, and gieue vs brasse for them, where with wee cannot buy such other like necessary commodities againe, as wee shoulde want if they were not plenty wythin our Realme.'²⁵¹

Of course, the issue is made more pronounced because, as the Doctor explains, the 'commonweal' of England depended upon the 'strangers' for the importation of 'necessaries' such as 'Iron, Tarre, Flaxe, and other'.²⁵² The English, he explains, are essentially powerless to alter the 'dearth' they are experiencing because despite the reduction of rents and prices in England, they 'coule not compell straungers to bring downe the price of theirs'.²⁵³ The danger posed by the debased currency is so great that the Doctor proposes an end to its use and instead 'vse exchange of ware for ware without Coyne (as it was before Coyne was founde)'.²⁵⁴ In order for this to be viable though, special attention must be paid to ensure that cheaper foreign goods were not exchanged for valuable English ones in order to avoid a greater deficit in England, which would increase the 'dearth' of 'necessary' goods; but, as the Doctor explains, a 'balance' of trade must be found despite the difficulty of locating 'equall value' in 'all wares'.²⁵⁵

The Discourse expresses a belief that 'strangers' will attempt to triumph over England by swinging the 'balance of trade' in their favour to the detriment of England; however, the blame is not one sided. For all that the foreign merchant is viewed as a trickster, not above aggression and intimidation, Smith's text also

²⁴⁹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, C1r.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid., C1r- C1v.

²⁵² Ibid., C3r.

²⁵³ Ibid., C2r.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

requires the English to answer for their part. Once again, a long list is used to display how English desire for these ‘unnecessary’ foreign ‘luxury’ goods – ‘trifles’ – actually fuels destabilisation in the ‘balance of trade’. Smith’s *Discourse* connects with the polemically inflated complaints about the English addiction for foreign fashion found in Andrew Boorde’s later *Introduction to Knowledge* (1555), which mockingly represents the Englishman’s sartorial indecision that leaves him ‘naked...Musying in [his] mynde, what raiment [he] wal were’.²⁵⁶ Similarly, Smith’s Doctor explains that:

There is no man can be contented now with any other Gloues then is made in *Fraunce* or in *Spayne*: nor Kersie but it muste bee of *Flaunders* dye: nor cloth but *French* or Fryseadowe: nor Duche, Brooch, or Agglette but of *Venice* making, or Millen: nor Dagger, Swearde Knife or Gyrdle but of spanish making, or some outward countrey, no not as much as a Spurre but that is fetched at the Millener. I haue heard within these xl. yeares when there were not of these Haberdashers that selles french or Millen Cappes Glasses, Kniues, Daggers, Swordes, Gyrdels and such thinges, not a dosen in all London: & now from the towne to Westminster alonge, euery Strete is full of them, and their shoppes glitters and shynes of glasses as well drynking as loking, yea all maner of vessell of the same stuffe: paynted cruses, gaie Daggers, Knyues, Swerdes, and Girdels that it is able to make any temperate man to gase on them and to buy somewhat, though it serue to no purpose necessarie.²⁵⁷

In what appears to be a call for the stringent enforcement of sumptuary laws, the Doctor and the Knight present the part played in this destabilisation by the demands made by liveried serving men for fine foreign apparel. Similarly, William Harrison would come to deride his fellow Englishmen in *The Description of England* (1577) for their:

mutabilitie, that to day there is none to the Spanishe guise, to morowe the French toyes are most fine and delectable, ere long no such apparell as that which is after the high Almaine fashion, by and by the Turkish maner is generally best liked of, otherwise the Morisco gownes and the Barbarian sléeues make such a comelye Vesture, that except it were a dog in a dublet, you shall not see anye so disguised, as are my country men of england...nothing is more constant in england then inconstancie of attire.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Andrew Boorde, *The fyrst boke of the Introduction of knowledge. The whych dothe teache a man to speake parte of all maner of languages, and to know the vsage and fashion of all maner of countreys, etc.* (London: William Copland, [1555?]), A3^v. From EEBO.

²⁵⁷ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G1^r-G1^v.

²⁵⁸ William Harrison, ‘The Thirde Booke of the Historically Description of Brytaine’ in *The Firste [laste] Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande Conteyning the Description and Chronicles of England, from the First Inhabiting Vnto the Conquest: the Description and Chronicles of Scotland, from the First Original of the Scottes Nation till the Yeare of Our Lorde 1571: the Description and Chronicles of Yrelande, Likewise from the First Originall of That Nation Untill the Yeare 1571 /*

This echoes the complaint that Smith's Doctor levels against the serving men of England who, despite his relatively humble status, 'will looke to haue at the least for sommer a coate of the finest cloth that may bee gotten for money, and his Hosen of the finest Kersey, and that of some straunge die, as Flaunders die, or french puke, that a Prince or great Lord can weare no finer, if he weare cloth.'²⁵⁹

While Smith's threatening foreign apparel is exclusively European, Harrison includes Eastern wares alongside European goods in his contemptuous description of English receptiveness to foreign fashion. This is an important development, since although Harrison raises similar concerns to Smith, he is responding to the new goods and expanded trade horizons of the late 1570s. However, Smith also explains that the demands of the serving men originate out of a contest between masters to have the best-attired liverymen.

The danger of this competitive pride between masters is that they are rendered less able to employ as large number of men as they had previously. This reduces potential sources of employment among the population, leading to increasing civil unrest caused by the rising levels of vagrancy, which repositions members of the English 'commonweal' as wealth-diminishing, potentially criminal human trash. It also affects England's capacity to defend itself in times of war; the Doctor reminds the assembled crowd of the need to be ready for war in times of peace and with no standing army, England's 'chiefe strength [was to be found] to be in our Seruingmen & yeomen' as they were expected to be practised in martial skills, even during 'tyme of peace'. Using the example of the fall of Rome, highlighting the part played by excess in 'apparell' and pride in that demise, the Doctor presents England, specifically London, with a warning that their desire for trifles and exotic luxuries needed to be curbed if disaster was to be avoided.²⁶⁰

Faithfully Gathered and Set Forth by Raphaell Holinshed (At London: Imprinted for Iohn Hunne, 1577), p.97. From EEBO.

²⁵⁹ Smith, *A Compendious or Brieffe Examination*, J1v.

²⁶⁰ Smith's Doctor's focus on London in this warning is understandable in the light of David Harris Sacks assertion that London 'was not just the dominant – the primate – city in England's, and later Britain's, developing urban system, but, since it drew supplies, new inhabitants, and markets from the four corners of the land, it also had most of England, and later much of Britain, as its hinterland.' If London, like Rome, fell to the desire for trash and trifles or excess in 'apparell', then the rest of the country would soon follow. [David Harris Sacks, 'London's Dominion: The Metropolis, the Market Economy, and the state', *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 20-54, p.20.]

Using the example of ‘paynted Clothes, & Papers, Orenge, Pippens, Cheryes, perfumed Gloues’, Smith’s Knight explains that it is ‘the polisie of all Marchaunts’ to unnecessarily bring these cheap goods – one half being perishable, while the other half could be produced at home – into England, where they are currently rare and therefore may be sold for more than they are actually worth.²⁶¹ He also speaks against the practise of re-importing English commodities in foreign merchandise, saying that English wool should be worked in England by English clothiers, or at the very least that any foreign clothiers using English wool should be living and working in England. According to these polemically inflated descriptions, the streets of London were awash with foreign ‘tryfles’; they would be found in the hands and costuming the bodies of the members of the English ‘commonweal’. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the later years of the sixteenth century, these contentious ‘tryfles’ began to be represented in the props and costumes of the early modern English stage.

Just as the concerns over ‘tryfles’ and ‘unnecessary’ foreign wares raised in Smith’s *Discourse* were still relevant and being referred to in the plays of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean stage, many of Smith’s concerns and suggestions are also evident in the colonial and international trading policies of the English ‘commonweal’ that were being shaped during the same period. As the rest of this thesis will show, later authors, statesmen and politicians would argue for the benefits of taking up similar policies to those recommended by Smith regarding the establishment of a protectionist European trading policy when they were attempting to secure their position within the Anglo-Ottoman and New World trading relationships. Smith’s *Discourse* should be viewed as a seminal text for the development of England’s sense of value and its part in the economic, political and colonial policy of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

‘Strangers’ and their ‘Tryfles’ on the Stage

Evidently the threat of ‘stranger’ merchants, with their imported trifles and corrupt trading practises, was still a matter of concern when *The Discourse* was

²⁶¹ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, D4^v.

printed in 1581, since it is also a principal concern in Robert Wilson's play of the same year, *The Three Ladies of London*.²⁶² The play and the printed edition of *The Discourse* emerge in the immediate aftermath of a new, and potentially provocative, trading alliance between Protestant England and the Islamic Ottoman Empire. Indeed, Smith's anxiety about 'stranger' merchants manipulating English naivety to treat them 'as men doe litle Children' are realised in the play through the corrupt and duplicitous trading practices perpetrated upon the English 'commonweal' by the 'stranger' merchant Mercadorus. The Italian Mercadorus is one of a number of foreign merchants that Lady Loue (Love) describes as having forsaken 'mother, Prince, Countrey, Religion, kiffe and kinne' in an attempt to 'winne' Lady Lucar – the allegorical personification of profit within the world of the play.²⁶³ Mercadorus asserts – in his broken English that acts as a constant reminder of his foreignness – 'Me will a forsake a my Fader, Moder, King, Countrey & more den dat.../ Me care not for all the world, the great Deuill, nay make my God angry for you' (II.326-329). According to Alan Stewart, 'Love of Lucar thus frees the merchant from ties of filial and patriotic duty... this love undoes him'; in addition, 'love of Lucar' or profit is also shown to be responsible for inverting or corrupting the ascription of values within the marketplace of the English 'commonweal'.²⁶⁴

The trading practises of Lucar and Mercadorus echo Smith's *Discourse* and the Doctor's description of the commodities on sale in London's haberdashery stalls – the 'french or Millen Cappes Glasses, Kniues, Daggers, Swordes, Gyrdels' – and William Harrison's complaint, in his *Historicall Description of Brytaine* (1577), that:

²⁶² Wilson's presentation of the threat of 'stranger' merchants is described by David Bevington, who asserts that Wilson's 'attitude bespeaks increased danger from the Catholic league, and indicates the willingness of Londoners to anticipate some kind of showdown...The alien threat is no longer simply on of inflated rents and trade competition for English artisans, but of undermining England's preparations for war... Honest English craftsmen, squeezed out of decent profits by the underpaid shoddy work of the Flemish, are scarcely able to feed their families...All of these abuses, though fed by English pusillanimity, originate in a foreign conspiracy.' [David M. Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics; A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.138-139].

²⁶³ Robert Wilson, *A Right Excellent and Famous Comoedy Called the Three Ladies of London Wherein Is Notablie Declared and Set Foorth, How by the Meanes of Lucar, Loue and Conscience Is so Corrupted, That the One Is Married to Dissimulation, the Other Fraught with All Abomination. A Perfect Patternne for All Estates to Looke into, and a Worke Right Worthie to Be Marked. Written by R.W. as It Hath Beene Publicquely Played* (At London: Printed by Roger VVarde, dwelling neere Holburne Conduit, at the signe of the Talbot, 1584), I.16-17. From EEBO.

²⁶⁴ Alan Stewart, "'Come from Turkie": Mediterranean Trade in Late Elizabethan London', in *Re-mapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English*, ed. by Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 157-177, pp.160-161.

‘for desire of noueltie we [the English] oft exchange our finest [commodities] for halfe penny cockhorses for children... painted feathers, gewgawes for fooles, dogtrickes for doltes... and such lyke, whereby we reape iuste mockage any reproach.’²⁶⁵ The ‘[b]ugles to make babies, coloured bones, glasse beades to make bracelettes withall...Amber, Ieat, Corall, Christall, and euerie such bable’ (II.336-338) are examples of the ‘trifles’ and ‘vaine toyes’ (II.758) which Lady Lucar demands the Italian merchant Mercadorus bring into the country. Not satisfied with importing these ‘trash’ goods, Lucar commands Mercadorus use ‘lying, flattering, and glosing’ to convince her fellow English gentlewomen to become consumers, calling into question her national allegiance. Appropriately, Lucar locates the appeal of these goods in their being ‘slight, prettie and pleasant’, irrespective of whether they are ‘profitable’ (II.339) to her or the ‘commonweal’. The presence of Lucar’s ‘vaine toyes’ and Harrison’s ‘gewgawes for fools’ also echoes the concern voiced in *The Discourse* about ‘stranger’ merchants exploiting English credulity to use them ‘as men doe litle Children, geeue them an appell for the best Jewell that they haue about them.’²⁶⁶

Although Smith suggests that ‘auarice’ and a love of ‘luker’ might be turned to England’s advantage, when Lucar is personified in *The Three Ladies*, her choice of exports is shown to actively threaten the English.²⁶⁷ She demands the exportation of ‘good commodities’: ‘Wheate, Pease, Barly, Oates, and Fitches, and all kinde of graine...Leather, Tallow, Beefe, Bacon, Belmettell’ (II.332-335). Stewart asserts that ‘[t]he export of staple goods was a constant cause of concern in London.’²⁶⁸ Lucar seeks to encourage this worrying exportation, compounding concerns by importing profitless ‘trifles’ in return. Parliamentary bills stand alongside the play as evidence of anxiety about the growth of the import/export market in England. The exportation of certain goods was strictly monitored, requiring a licence. From 1565, the Port Books, which were designed to be a more effective means of customs collection, had ‘begun their minute records of the entries and clearances of goods from all English ports.’²⁶⁹ From this point onwards, the exportation of

²⁶⁵ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G1r; Harrison, *Description of Brytaine*, Piii.

²⁶⁶ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G3v.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, M2r.

²⁶⁸ Stewart, “Come from Turkie”, p.162.

²⁶⁹ State Papers, Eliz., xxxv.39; xxxvii. 70; xxxviii. 30. As discussed in Frederick C. Dietz, ‘Elizabethan Customs Administration’, *The English Historical Review*, 45 (1930), 35-57, p.38.

many of the items Lucar describes as ‘good commodities’ would have entailed high duties. Lucar’s request for Mercadorus to ‘[s]ecretlie...conuey good commodities out of this countrey’ (II.323) is likely motivated by a desire to avoid such costs. Through this depiction, Wilson satirically references contemporaneous anxieties by showing his audience the ease of evading the legislation. In doing so, ‘he took upon himself the task of correcting commonwealths.’²⁷⁰

In addition to smuggling exports, *The Three Ladies* also subverts another bill, that had its second reading on the 4th June 1572 and which sought to prevent ‘the Bringing in of foreign Wares forbidden’, since Mercadorus’ primary concern regarding the importation of the foreign ‘trifles’ Lucar desires is that: ‘some skall knaue will put a bill in da Parliament./ For dat such a tings shall not be brought here’ (II.352-353).²⁷¹ Should Lucar be unable to, ‘fetch that bill away’ (II.356), she offers a solution that would both evade the import ban and the payment of customs duties. She suggests that Mercadorus learn from his fellow merchants ‘[and] by stealth bring ouer great store:/ And say it was in the Realme a long time before’ (II.358-360). This is reminiscent of a practise known as ‘colouring goods’, whereby suitably unscrupulous English freemen misrepresented foreign merchants’ goods as their own to avoid paying duties – both parties sharing in the benefits of defrauding England.²⁷² Should those goods be defective or of a lower quality, their presence jeopardised the assessment of truly English goods as a whole. Like an infection, ‘coloured goods’ taint the native objects alongside them. Indeed, in 1574, Barnabe Rich’s *Right Exelent and Pleasaunt Dialogue, Betwene Mercury and an English Souldier*, presents fraudulent market practices as an aggressive military tactic ‘wherwith the besieged hath bene beguiled... [s]ometime by sending Souldiers vnder the colour of market men, dryuing beastes laden with trashe’ with the intention of deceiving them to ‘spen[d] their victuals’ in order to make them ‘yeld’ through ‘famishment’.²⁷³ The stranger merchants’ trash and

²⁷⁰ Robert Wilson, *An Edition of Robert Wilson’s Three Ladies of London and Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, ed. by H. S. D. Mithal (New York: Garland Pub, 1988), p.lxxxvi.

²⁷¹ British History Online, ‘House of Commons Journal Volume 1 - 04 June 1572’, *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1*, 2003 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>> [accessed 19 March 2013]; Stewart, “Come from Turkie”, p.163

²⁷² Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p.57.

²⁷³ Barnabe Rich, *A Right Exelent and Pleasaunt Dialogue, Betwene Mercury and an English Souldier Contayning His Supplication to Mars: Bevvtfified with Sundry Worthy Histories, Rare Inuentions, and*

trifles are hereby presented as posing a martial as much as a mercantile threat to the English commonwealth.

Not only have foreign merchants impoverished English craftsmen with their deceitful practises but their success apparently inspires English traders to behave with similar corruption, potentially damaging the English reputation at home and abroad. The plans of Lucar and her male accomplices subsequently affect the wider community. In order to avoid the starvation of himself and his family, Artifex turns from 'liuing hitherto with good Conscience' and 'true woorking' (II.377-387) towards Dissimulation. Additionally, as David Kathman points out, 'Love marries Dissimulation; Conscience becomes a whore to Lucre; and Hospitality's throat is cut by Usury.'²⁷⁴ A clear motivation for Usury's attack on Hospitality is not provided by Wilson, they 'are simply assumed to be mutually hostile and incompatible'; however, hospitality should be read as 'a synonym for charity in general', which, in turn, connects usury to 'the pursuit of self-interest... [that] eradicates the traditional sense of communal responsibility'.²⁷⁵

As explained above, the '[i]ncreasing consumption', described by Muldrew, within sixteenth century England led to a growth in household indebtedness and, therefore, a magnified threat from usury. Indeed, according to Celeste Turner Wright, in Elizabethan England 'few moral and economic issues were more significant than the question of usury'.²⁷⁶ Through *The Three Ladies* Wilson uses '[t]he questions of trade, trust, and treachery, property, pelf, and perfidy... to expose usury as a root cause for a city's and its people's misery.'²⁷⁷ Accusations of usurious dealings in early modern England was 'a common sign of [perceived] personal and public moral degradation' that could be used to make 'an argument about trade, investment, aid of the poor, and government and for working on a moral, economic, and socially hierarchical machine that was seen to be failing'.²⁷⁸ Laurence Fontaine explains that 'accusing someone of usury was undoubtedly

Politike Deuises. Wrytten by B. Rich: Gen. 1574 (London: J. Day These bookes are to be sold by H. Disle at the corner shop, at the South west doore of Paules church, 1574), Fviii^v. From JISC Historical Texts.

²⁷⁴ David Kathman, 'Wilson, Robert (d. 1600)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) [accessed 20 April 2013] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29682>>

²⁷⁵ Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury*, p.97.

²⁷⁶ Celeste Turner Wright, 'Some Conventions Regarding the Usurer in Elizabethan Literature', *Studies in Philology* 31 (1934), 176-97, p.176.

²⁷⁷ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.1.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.2.

indicative of the very low degree of personalization of the credit relationship. As such, only foreigners – who were also competitors – or rivals were accused. The accusation was a weapon.²⁷⁹ In this way, the term usury was usable in a similar manner to trash and trifles, since they were all used to attack or denounce the mercantile activities of others, in particular ‘strangers’ and women.²⁸⁰

In a way that has not hitherto been recognised by critics, *The Three Ladies* presents an extreme representation of Smith’s warning about uncontrolled trading within the ‘commonweal’. Wilson’s play shows the corruption of the English marketplace by a ‘stranger’ merchant and his female accomplice, infecting the entirety of the state – including its morality. Love of Lucar and her ‘tryfles’ has gone unchecked by a ‘perfect counsell’ of English men; the result is the total distortion of value, caused by one part of the ‘commonweal’ becoming unbalanced – ‘tryfles’ have been allowed to outweigh ‘treasure’.

Values had also changed off-stage in Elizabethan England; under the Protestant queen, enmity was no longer primarily aimed at the ‘Great Turk’, shifting instead towards the Catholic states. Elizabeth’s excommunication by Pope Pius V in 1570 released England from papal edict – for example the prohibited ‘selling of materials for weapons to infidels’.²⁸¹ Just like the men of *The Three Ladies* who forsake their familial and patriotic obligations, there were a number of English men involved in smuggling arms, to both the Catholic Spanish enemy and the Muslim Turks, illustrating that ‘the constraints of patriotism and religion proved less strong than the profit motive’.²⁸² As Jonathan Burton explains, ‘if the Turks remained infidel dogs in some Elizabethan contexts, to English diplomats they became tactical allies in the long struggle against Spain. A similar set of circumstances motivated the Turks’.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Laurence Fontaine, *The Moral Economy: Poverty, Credit, and Trust in Early Modern Europe*, First English edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.68-69.

²⁸⁰ Fontaine also explains that ‘women were in the same financial slot as other minorities. Not having full political rights, foreigners found it equally difficult to get into business or to become established as craftsmen; like women, many of them had to turn to ventures in which their legal incapacity was not a hindrance: the world of money lending and the informal economy.’ [Fontaine, *The Moral Economy*, p.156]

²⁸¹ Dimmock, ‘Guns and Gawds’, p.216.

²⁸² Pauline Croft, ‘Trading with the Enemy 1585-1604’, *The Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 281-302, p.294.

²⁸³ Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p.56.

Stewart believes that ‘it is telling that Mercadorus, although emphatically and comically Italian, is at pains from the outset to tell Lucar that he has “come from Turkie”’.²⁸⁴ Doing so dramatically connects him to the actual Anglo-Ottoman trading negotiations of the late 1570s and the Capitulations of May 1580, which secured the rights of English merchant travellers to Turkey and is an important factor in the shifting attribution of values within this London community.²⁸⁵ The shift in this play, where ‘vaine toyces’ replaced ‘good commodities’ in the estimation of English gentlewomen, matches the shift in the measuring and understanding of value by English merchants. For, as Parker explains, there was something else ‘come from Turkie’ into England during the sixteenth century – a ‘new arithmetic of the pen’, which included the ‘Infidel 0’. Through the importation of ‘Arabic numerals’ there was, for the first time in England, the capacity to value something as being worth literally nothing.²⁸⁶

Evidently by 1578 certain individuals within England were looking to broaden their ‘commonweal’s’ trading horizons beyond its Catholic neighbours and outside of Christendom, so much so that Sir Francis Walsingham was tasked, in this year, with producing a document that investigated the benefits of trading with the Ottomans. The first line of Walsingham’s *Memorandum on the Turkey Trade or A Consideracion of the Trade into Turkie* (1578) reads: ‘In all trades two thinges princypally are to be Considered, proffitte and suertie, for if they be not ioyned together, they are in no waies to be attempted.’²⁸⁷ According to Walsingham the value of trade with Turkey included the preservation, through work, of the naval fleet and the expansion of the marketplace through a wider selection of commodities being imported for sale, something that may serve the realm of England and, through her, the rest of Europe, which would in turn further enrich

²⁸⁴ Stewart, “Come from Turkie”, p. 160.

²⁸⁵ Stewart, “Come from Turkie”, p. 160; Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p.63-71.

²⁸⁶ Patricia Parker, ‘Cassio, Cash, and the “Infidel 0”: Arithmetic, Double-entry Bookkeeping, and Othello’s Unfaithful Accounts’, in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 223-241, pp.223-225.

²⁸⁷ Sir Francis Walsingham, *A Consideracion of the Trade into Turkie*, British Library Cotton Nero B/XI f.280. From SPO.

England in both money and prestige.²⁸⁸ Additionally, he states that through the trade with Turkey, '[y]ou shall vent your owne commodities with most proffitte which beffore did fall into strangers handes': it offered the 'commonweal' the ability to cut out the 'stranger' merchant or 'middleman' from the transaction, thereby enabling more of the profits to be held by Englishmen.²⁸⁹ Smith's ideas, which influenced Cecil and the council's policy, also seem to have influenced Walsingham.

England's need for new trading allegiances was compounded by the disruption in their European trading relationships that were a feature of the early 1570s, with the fourth Ottoman-Venetian War (1570-1573) and the fall of Antwerp to the Spanish in 1572 impeding English importation of those 'tryfles' that Smith had deemed 'necessary' for civilised living, namely 'silks and spices, through the Antwerp market or via French or Venetian shipping.'²⁹⁰ Catholic Europe was in conflict with Islam to the east and Protestantism to the west. In a clear case of an enemy's enemy being a friend, Protestant England allied itself with the Muslim Ottoman Empire through a mutually beneficial diplomatic relationship that was cemented through trade. English tin, steel and lead functioned as vital materials for the Ottoman war effort, fostering a strong and direct trading relationship with England, which also served to injure the Venetian economy. Equally, England would benefit from establishing alternative trading relationships that would allow them to circumvent Spain's growing stranglehold over trade routes and shipping lanes.²⁹¹

Following Elizabeth's excommunication, England found itself alongside the Ottoman Empire in a shared opposition to Catholic Europe. This break and the Reformation of which it was a part had also left England with a surplus of papal 'trash' that could be recycled into an Anglo-Ottoman trading commodity. As Bernadette Andrea explains, '[e]arly modern Protestantism and Islam held strong affinities, both politically (as allies against the Catholic Hapsburg powers) and

²⁸⁸ S. A Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1977), p.28. See also: Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp.61-74.

²⁸⁹ Walsingham, 'A Consideration of the Trade into Turkey'.

²⁹⁰ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p.58.

²⁹¹ As Burton explains: 'Spain had recently annexed Portugal's overseas empire and shipping lanes, creating difficult conditions for the export of woollen cloth essential to the English economy.' [*Traffic and Turning*, p.58.]

ideologically (as iconoclasts and rigorous monotheists)': indeed, Sultan Murad III praised 'the Lutheran sect in Flanders and Spain' because they, 'do not worship idols', having 'banished the idols and portraits and 'bells' from churches, and declared your faith by stating that God Almighty is One and Holy Jesus is His Prophet and Servant, and now, with heart and soul, are seeking and desirous of the true faith.'²⁹²

For her part, Queen Elizabeth overtly played upon England's Protestant iconoclasm when communicating with her Ottoman counterpart. Her letter to Murad III on 25th October 1579 opens with a Latin salutation, which was translated as follows, by Richard Hakluyt in *The Principall Nauigations*:

ELizabeth by the grace of the most mightie God, and onely Creatour of heauen and earth, of England, France and Ireland Queene, the most inuincible and most mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries, of all that liue among the Christians, and fasly professe the Name of Christ, vnto the most Imperiall and most inuincible prince, *Zuldan Murad Can*, the most mightie ruler of the kingdome of *Turkie*, sole and aboue all, and most souereigne Monarch of the East Empire, greeting, and many happy and fortunate yeeres, with abundance of the best things.²⁹³

Burton describes this as a 'strategic use of religious rhetoric to provide ideological support for what became an infamous arms trade.'²⁹⁴ Through her role as the 'most mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries', which was realised in the iconoclastic plundering of England's Catholic churches and abbeys, Elizabeth had caused her 'commonweal' to have an abundance of 'broken bells and images'.²⁹⁵ This 'papal trash' or 'bell metal' was exported from England to the Ottoman Empire alongside 'iron...steel, lead, copper, arquebuses, muskets, sword-blades, brimstone, saltpetre and gunpowder'.²⁹⁶ Although '[n]one of the correspondence between Elizabeth and Murad mentions the arms trade', Elizabeth is conspicuously advertising herself as an iconoclast and enemy of Catholic Europe

²⁹² Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.23.

²⁹³ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea or Ouer Land, to the Most Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at Any Time within the Compasse of These 1500 Yeeres: Deuided into Three Seuerall Parts, according to the Positions of the Regions Wherunto They Were Directed ... Whereunto Is Added the Last Most Renowmed English Nauigation, Round about the Whole Globe of the Earth* (London: Bishop, Newberie and Barker, 1599-1600), Vol. 2, p.139. From JISC Historical Texts.

²⁹⁴ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p.58.

²⁹⁵ V.J. Parry, 'The Successors of Sulaiman, 1566-1617' in *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, ed. by M. A. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.124.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

in these letters.²⁹⁷ In doing so, she employs religious rhetoric to validate her own religious policy, to emphasise a shared idol-free religious practise between Protestantism and Islam, and to remind Murad III of their shared enemy – Catholic Europe.²⁹⁸ As Burton explains, the '[t]erm "bell metals" soon came to denote the prohibited goods England would ship furtively to Turkish territories', where they would be used to create ordnance.²⁹⁹ England's Ottoman trading partners were recycling the 'commonweal's' 'papal trash' into tools that might be used to threaten the 'idolatrous' Papal States, their shared enemy, with destruction.

The exportation of England's 'bell metals', which required a royal licence, is dramatised in *The Three Ladies of London*; Lady Lucar commands Mercadorus to 'carie...Belmettell', without the required licence, to be sold 'beyond sea, and bring suche Merchauntes great gaine' (II.333-334). Mercadorus, who has just 'come from Turkie', confesses that: 'me and my cuntrimans haue [already] sent ouer, bell mettell for make ordinance, yea/ and ordinance it selfe beside' (II.347-348). Although Wilson's play acknowledges the existence of the potentially dangerous practise of unlicensed trafficking in 'bell metals' and ordnance to the Ottoman Empire, even showing it suggested by an English woman, it is distanced from the 'commonweal' when Mercadorus confesses that he and his Italian 'countrimans' have already been active participants in that trade, despite the fact that Rome had refused to licence and, in fact, explicitly prohibited such trading among all faithful Catholics. Wilson's comedy shows Italian merchants profiting while Rome, in its hypocrisy, seeks to prohibit the rest of Catholic Europe from benefitting in a similar manner. Although Wilson does not explicitly draw this correlation in his play, the recognisably anti-Catholic agenda of his work makes it plausible that he had just such a connection in mind.³⁰⁰

Europe's complicated relationship with the Ottoman Empire is similarly the subject of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (c. 1589-90); Malta is shown to be

²⁹⁷ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p.61.

²⁹⁸ Murad III's own letters to Elizabeth followed a similar trajectory; Karen Ordahl Kupperman explains that: '[i]n his correspondance with Elizabeth, Murad emphasized that Islam and Protestantism had much more in common than either did with Roman Catholicism, as both rejected worship of idols, and he suggested that an alliance between the Ottoman Empire and England would be welcome.' [Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p.40]

²⁹⁹ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, p. 61.

³⁰⁰ David Kathman, 'Wilson, Robert (d. 1600)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) [accessed 5 Jan 2013] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29682>>

simultaneously involved in trading with the Ottoman lands and threatened by the presence of the Ottoman navy. From the outset the play's titular *Jew*, Barabas, informs the audience of his Eastern trading links:

So that of thus much that return was made;
And, of the third part of the Persian ships
There was the venture summed and satisfied.
As for those Samnites and the men of Uz,
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
Here have I pursed their paltry silverlings.
Fie, what a trouble 'tis to count this trash!³⁰¹

Barabas' Jewish identity makes him a 'stranger' merchant within the Catholic Maltese state. He exports victuals from Spain and Greece to the 'Samnites' (an ancient Italian tribe who went to war with the pre-Christian Roman Republic) and 'the men of Uz' (potentially referring either to the Biblical description of the birth place of Job or to the Uzbeks – an ancient nomadic Turkic tribe), using Muslim 'Persian ships' to import these nation's 'paltry silverlings' in return.³⁰² Barabas is a Jewish 'stranger' exporting Europe's necessary victuals to foreign lands: to compound this Barabas employs those who are nationally and religiously 'other' to import such a quantity of precious and exotic goods into Malta that he makes vast sums of money – so vast that money itself is made 'trash'.

Barabas' trading practises are suspect and dangerous because they enrich him alone; indeed, he is so wealthy that his large quantity of silver is not only 'paltry', but 'trash'. His acquisitive behaviour with this precious metal leads to a symbolic deflation, a loss of proper value, which compromises the value of the coin he holds. By storing up this enormous amount of treasure, which is of no service to the 'commonweal' that he resides in, he devalues it. According to Lisa Jardine, beyond his Jewishness, it is actually the manner in which Barabas earns his living that marks him as 'strange':

He profits from exchanges in commodities – but not commodities he has manufactured. His profit derives from his knowledge and understanding of markets, his ability to anticipate the rise and fall in demands, his judgment as to what goods are valued more highly in one location than another. His transactions do, therefore conform more to the pattern of intellectual service than to the simple supply model of manufacture. I think it is important to

³⁰¹ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* in *Complete Plays and Poems*, ed. by E. D. Pendry (London: Everyman, 1996), I.i.1-7.

³⁰² "Samnite, n. and adj." and "Uzbek, n.". *OED Online*. December 2012 [accessed 25 February 2013]

recognise that mercantile transactions, like knowledge transactions, were 'strange' in early modern England.³⁰³

Barabas earns money by spending money. He provides financial backing for international trading voyages, where common commodities that could be cheaply bought at one site are transported to another location, where such merchandise was rare and therefore desirable enough to result in profit for the merchant behind the venture. Barabas' fortune is based upon the profit accrued through international trade. That fortune has become so large that it allows him to fund future ventures 'out of surplus, and without apparent personal risk'.³⁰⁴ Although Barabas is a merchant and not a moneylender, his evident capacity to generate wealth contradicted a core belief: the 'barrenness of money was a fundamental tenet of early modern Christianity'.³⁰⁵ As Jardine explains, 'there hovers around early modern profitable commercial transactions in England a suspicion of the illicit or forbidden.'³⁰⁶ His mercantile practice, based upon 'deferred profit' that was commonly associated with money lending for interest, would have looked strangely similar to usury.³⁰⁷ Kermode argues that Barabas' ability to regain the wealth that the Maltese state confiscated 'almost overnight' is telling, since 'we are surely meant to understand that there is only one method – usury – by which money can be so rapidly, miraculously, and unnaturally restored.'³⁰⁸ Alongside this morally suspect currency generation, Barabas accrues profit by transporting surplus cheap wares to places where their scarcity allowed them to be sold at a considerable mark-up. This echoes Smith's Knight's concerns about 'the polisie of all Marchaunts', which led them to bring over 'unnecessary' and cheap wares that were scarce in England – 'paynted Clothes, & Papers, Oranges, Pippens, Cheryes, perfumed Gloues' – in order to sell them for more than they were worth.

Barabas is the literary successor of the 'stranger' merchants that are a focus of anxiety within *The Discourse* and the Lucar-loving Mercadorus of *The Three Ladies*. Indeed, Barabas behaves like '[t]he wealthy Moor' that he describes a few lines later because his trade is not intended to 'serve [Malta] in peril of calamity';

³⁰³ Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.102-103.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p.107.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p.103.

³⁰⁸ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.3.

instead of putting his success at the disposal of the 'commonweal' in which he resides, 'as [his] wealth increaseth, so [he] enclose[s]/ Infinite riches in a little room' (I.i.21-37). Despite not contributing financially to Christendom with his mercantile activities, Barabas is reliant upon the defensive might of 'a Spanish fleet' to ensure that his 'argosy from Alexandria...Laden with riches and exceeding store/ Of Persian silks, of gold, and orient pearl' could sail 'round by Candy shore' and reach Malta in safety when it was threatened by having 'the galleys of the Turk in chase.' (I.i.84-96)

However, when '[a] fleet of warlike galleys...come from Turkey' sits outside the walls of Malta Barabas is quick to ask Ferneze, the Governor of Malta: 'Are strangers with your tribute to be tax'd?' (I.ii.59).³⁰⁹ By seeking to avoid any responsibility for Malta's debt Barabas shows that, to paraphrase Smith, he wishes to be 'a stranger to the commonweale he is in'. Unwilling to be a value adding economic unit for the Maltese 'commonweal', Barabas becomes instead a destructive (trashing) figure within it. As James Shapiro explains, the bragging villainy and threatening violence displayed by Barabas represents 'the familiar categories of the Jew as murderer, poisoner, usurer, and political interloper.'³¹⁰ The 'stranger' merchant's position, having intimate knowledge of a place but no national loyalty to it, allowed them to be viewed with suspicion; in addition to their propensity for duplicitous trading practises, their presence could, as Marlowe's play shows, bring success to an invading force. Dena Goldberg states that '[t]he ills of the community are due to some source of pollution in its midst and only the exculpation of that evil will restore general well-being.'³¹¹ The 'stranger' merchant represented economic and national 'pollution'; action would have to be taken to contain and cleanse the threat they posed to the 'commonweal'.

Although Barabas' actions only affect life in Malta, early in the play he states:

They say we are a scattered nation:
I cannot tell; but we have scrambled up
More wealth by far than those that brag of faith.

³⁰⁹ In Barabas' mind Malta is the debtor and he is a 'stranger' to their pecuniary dealings. Certainly, Barabas would have been exempt from the fiscal duties that were owed by Maltese citizens to their state; his 'position as alien merchant places him to one side of the customary levies which return a percentage of merchant profit to the state.' [Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*, p.101]

³¹⁰ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.92.

³¹¹ Dena Goldberg, 'Sacrifice in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 32 (1992), 233-245, p.234.

There's Kirriah Jairim, the great Jew of Greece,
 Obed in Bairseth, Nones in Portugal,
 Myself in Malta, some in Italy,
 Many in France, and wealthy every one;
 Ay, wealthier far than any Christian. (I.i.119-126)

This would have highlighted the ubiquitous presence of Jewish 'stranger' merchants throughout Europe. Jardine again:

The traditional prominence of Jewish families as merchants and as bankers derived in part from the scattered nature of their communities: as a diaspora they had family members, or at least contacts with some connection or bond of attachment, throughout Europe and the Orient.³¹²

They were perceived to be actively involved in every corner of global trading, without being loyal to any country: being Jewish placed them in the ambiguous position of being a nation without a defined national boundary. England is not named in Barabas' list; the Jewish population had been expelled from England in 1290 and would not be formally readmitted until 1656. Nevertheless, the 'stranger' merchants who were present in and traded with England were involved in the global trading network where these Jewish merchants and bankers held prominence. The multifaceted foreign influences represented by these 'stranger' merchants formed the focus for staged and real anxieties regarding the preservation and improvement of the 'commonweal' of England. Just as Smith's text sought to mediate England's transition from its early mercantile isolation into a protected 'commonweal' that could benefit from European trading, Marlowe's play 'raises...fundamentally early modern questions concerning the transition from old to early modern commercial worlds.'³¹³

Tackling 'Tryfles' on the Streets

In an example of life imitating art, the dramatised threat of duplicitous and murderous 'stranger' merchants seen in *The Three Ladies* and *The Jew of Malta* was

³¹² Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.110.

³¹³ Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*, p.99.

presented as a fact on the evening of 5th May 1593.³¹⁴ At some point during that night, a document was affixed to the door of one of London's Protestant 'stranger' churches that was addressed to 'Ye strangers y^t doe inhabite in this lande'.³¹⁵ It became known as the 'Dutch Church Libel'.

The libeller signs himself 'Tamberlaine', after Marlowe's eponymous warrior and thus evokes the name of a popular contemporary figure from the stage.³¹⁶ However, Tamburlaine also personified extreme violence and 'remorseless conquest' with a 'notorious custom of slaughtering the inhabitants of a besieged town if they disobeyed his orders to evacuate.'³¹⁷ 'Tamberlaine' posts his ballad to threaten the 'strangers' in 'his' city should they fail to depart.³¹⁸ Additionally, Nicholl suggests that because of the Libel's performative 'ballad format', it was written with the intention of being 'sung or chanted as the anti-Dutch mob went about its business.'³¹⁹

The two parts of *Tamburlaine* (1587-8) were not 'Tamberlaine's' only influences – by defining the immigrant 'stranger' as a 'Machiavellian Marchant', who 'like the Jewes' can be found 'in...temples praying', not in a church, 'Tamberlaine' 'conflates popular animosity towards strangers, Machiavellians, merchants and Jews', a strategy found in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (c.1589-90).³²⁰ 'Tamberlaine' subsequently uses the title of another of Marlowe's plays, *The Massacre at Paris* (1593), to demonstrate the bloodshed he hopes to incite, writing: 'Not paris massacre so much blood did spill'.³²¹ It is a disturbing allusion for a libel that, despite its name, is now thought to have been posted on a church for immigrant French Protestants, since both ballad line and the play inspiring it refer 'to the slaughter of French Protestants on St Bartholomew's Eve 1572'.³²² All three plays would certainly have remained current at the time of the Libel's posting: *Tamburlaine* was still being staged in the decade following its first performance

³¹⁴ Matthew Dimmock, 'Tamburlaine's Curse: An Answer to a Great Marlowe Mystery', *TLS: Times Literary Supplement*, 2010, 16-17, p.16.

³¹⁵ 'A Libel', Line 1.

³¹⁶ Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.135.

³¹⁷ Charles Nicholl, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1992), p.318.

³¹⁸ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p.318.

³¹⁹ Nicholl, *The Reckoning*, p.40.

³²⁰ 'A Libel', Lines 5-39; Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p.318.

³²¹ 'A Libel', Line 40.

³²² Nicholl, *The Reckoning*, pp.41-42.

and the two later plays were both performed by the Lord Strange's Men in January 1593.³²³

While Marlowe's influence is present in the Libel's violent threats, the concerns inciting that violence are also found in *The Three Ladies of London*. The causes behind this rising violence can be pinpointed as originating out of 'a series of perceived threats to social value and to stability – Spanish invasion, creeping Catholic incursions, bad harvests, and alleged attempts on the Queen's life', characterising the 'crisis years of the 1590s', which 'led to an outpouring of antforeign discourses, both legal and literary, and even to riots.'³²⁴ The crisis was not new; one such 'riot' occurred in 1517, on what became known as Evil May Day, when 'a thousand boatmen and apprentices to various trades had spent the night looting the houses of London's immigrants'.³²⁵ The multi-authored *Book of Sir Thomas More* (c.1592-1593) features a staged display of that riot. The fact that the queen's Master of the Revels heavily censored the authorial manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*, ordering the actors to 'Leave out the insurrection wholly and the Cause thereof' shows that 'the uprising was deemed too sensitive a subject for public performance', perhaps because it was feared that another might be about to surface.³²⁶ This would certainly explain the fervour with which the new Royal Commission, created 26th March, investigated the Libel. The Commission's existence prior to the Libel's emergence points to a sense of potential public unrest, providing the impetus for the Libel's creation and clearly concerning the queen and her councillors.³²⁷

Concern over England's economic situation, caused by rising inflation in the late 1540s, led Smith to create his manuscript *Discourse* and helps to explain why that particular text displays such a degree of 'suspicion of [imported] items without obvious function'; Yungblut explains that the *Discourse* 'held that England produced and exported solid, sensible materials and goods, but that foreigners

³²³ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p.318.

³²⁴ Stewart, "Come from Turkie", pp.164-165.

³²⁵ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, pp.317-318.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Kermode explains that, '[f]or the nobility and royalty, the issue of foreignness was one of nationwide importance. Questions about the security of the State from the reign of Henry VIII to James I were often underlain by domestic relations: if one rank of persons wanted to benefit from the advantages of the presence of foreigners while those foreigners imposed hardship on another rank of English citizens, there would be internal conflict in the country. This division is manifest in the Dutch Church Libel' [Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.12].

imported non-essential or luxury commodities that, besides being expensive, were not durable or even useful', which created an 'unfavorable balance of trade' and rising inflation.³²⁸ Smith's text was reproduced and published in 1581, signalling 'an ongoing preoccupation with the issue.'³²⁹ *The Discourse* warned against allowing 'stranger' merchants to profit from English gullibility, by treating them 'as men doe litle Children' and impoverishing the 'commonweal' through taking its 'treasure' away. Ian W. Archer explains that England's economic writers and moralists, like Smith, 'regarded the problem of the capital's poverty as being exacerbated both by rapacious consumption and by the aggressive business practices which accompanied economic expansion. Consumption of superfluities withdrew resources from poor relief and weakened overall national resources; the poor frittered away their resources in idle pastimes, and excessive consumption impoverished citizens.'³³⁰ Just as Usury evicts Conscience from her home and physically attacks Hospitality in Wilson's *Three Ladies*, the desire for mercantile trash and trifles also jeopardised the commonwealth's ability to be willing or able to provide the financial support for the poorest in the community – all were impoverished, both morally and fiscally.

Similarly, the libeller is grieved by the lack of parity between English exports and foreign imports, the Libel's 'Machiavellian Marchant spoyles the state' by exporting English 'goods' and importing 'gawds'.³³¹ These same concerns about the value of things and their cost, and the exploitation of the 'commonweal' by 'stranger' merchants, had persisted throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. The 'tryfles' of *The Discourse*, the 'vaine toyes' of *The Three Ladies* and the Libel's 'gawds' continuously threatened to replace England's 'good commodities', which the Libel specifies as 'Leade...Vittaille [and] Ordenance', the requirements of a well-supplied, capable army and a secure 'commonweal'.³³² Indeed, these concerns, which Smith had voiced in his 1549 manuscript of *The Discourse*, influenced government policy in 1591 when the Privy Council accused merchants who exported these 'goods' of operating 'to the great prejudice of the realm and

³²⁸ Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds', p.214; Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us*, pp.100-101.

³²⁹ Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds', p.213.

³³⁰ Ian W. Archer, 'Material Londoners' in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 174-192, p.183.,

³³¹ 'A Libel', Lines 5-17.

³³² *Ibid.*, Lines 17-18.

the strengthening of the enemy' by critically destabilising 'the crucial "balance" of trade' against England.³³³

Smith, writing in the 1540s, was seeking a remedy for the 'dearth' that was being experienced by his 'commonweal': similarly the 1590s were typified by '[r]epeated crop failures, desperate food shortages, escalating inflation, ruinous overseas conflict, extreme inequality and a court torn by faction led by a distant and ageing monarch', which had a 'radicalising effect'.³³⁴ When coupled with the xenophobic suspicions of the preceding decades, the situation approached flashpoint. This was no doubt exacerbated by the House of Commons vote on 23rd March 1593 'to extend the privileges of resident aliens'.³³⁵ Certainly, by the evening of 5th May 1593, the 'strangers y^t doe inhabite in this lande' had become a pressing concern for those who produced and posted the 'Dutch Church Libel'.³³⁶ The Libel is both an overt threat of violence, to the 'lyves...goods...children, & dearest wives of the 'strangers', and an incitement to commit violence, with 'swords [that] are whet, to shedd...[foreign] blood'.³³⁷ The violence is, as is often the case, motivated by fear, which centres upon the threat posed, by 'stranger' merchants and their imported 'tryfles', to the 'treasure' of the 'commonweal' of England. The Libel has turned the concerns and suggestions found in Smith's *Discourse* into violent invective; the libeller, like Wilson, is 'studying' Smith 'for action'.³³⁸

Following the civic unrest caused by the presence of 'strangers' in England and in response to the threat that was posed to these 'strangers' by the resentful English, '[b]y the end of the century, the crown had decided to protect Dutch aliens because they were generators of wealth and conduits for technical and financial innovations from the continent.'³³⁹ Government policy, perhaps influenced in part by Smith's *Discourse*, saw these 'strangers' as value adding participants in the

³³³ Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy', p.292; Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds', p. 211.

³³⁴ Dimmock, 'Tamburlaine's Curse', p.16.

³³⁵ Nicholl, *The Reckoning*, p.39.

³³⁶ 'A Libel', Line 1.

³³⁷ Ibid., Lines 3-4;52.

³³⁸ In this I am drawing parallels with Jardine and Grafton's assertions in "'Studied for Action'", which brings to light the complex way that early modern readers understood and undertook the act of reading.

³³⁹ John Michael Archer, 'Citizens and Aliens as Working Subjects in Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*' in *Working Subjects in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Michelle M. Dowd and Natasha Korda (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.44.

'commonweal' who, by making their goods in England, reduced the country's dependence on imported foreign 'trifles'. This official action was reflected on the English stage in Thomas Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) through the acceptance shown by the English shoemakers, in Simon Eyre's shop, for the Dutchman Hans. However, since Hans is really the disguised English nobleman, Rowland Lacy, the '[t]oleration [that] is the unlikely order of the day in Eyre's shop' can be inoffensively presented on the early modern English stage within this framework of a romantic and comedic tale of cross-dressed national identity.³⁴⁰

Lloyd Edward Kermode states that, '*The Shoemaker's Holiday*...shows the enriching of English citizens through alien presence; furthermore, it is precisely the importation of luxury goods so railed against by the moral tracts and Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* that now *benefits* native welfare.'³⁴¹ The Dutch Skipper is the only true 'stranger' to appear on the stage of *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. He announces that his ship is '*comen from Candy*' and is laden with '*sugar, civet, almonds, cambric*' and a '*tousand tousand*' things; all of which he wishes to sell to Simon Eyre as a '*good copen* [bargain]'.³⁴² Smith described these luxury items, which were the 'trifles' and 'vaine toyes' that formed the focus of tension in *The Three Ladies*, as the 'necessities' for the civilised lifestyle that was expected of England's gentlemen; particularly in the case of a perfume ingredient like 'civet'.

The disguised nobleman Hans/ Lacy brings the shoemaker Eyre 'to buy a ship worth the lading of two or three hundred pounds', which Eyre's fellow shoemaker Firk describes as 'a trifle, a bauble' (vii.14-16). In Dekker's fluid and socially mobile marketplace this 'trifle...[or] bauble' from '*Candy*', which contained the 'necessary' luxuries of the nobility, provided Eyre with the opportunity to 'be an huge gainer himself' (vii.22). Although Simon Eyre is motivated by personal gain his trade with 'stranger' merchants, which fuels his own social mobility, is also shown to improve the lot of his community. The deal allows Eyre to 'move out of his trade to bring himself and his wife to great estate', but it poses no threat to his 'commonweal'.³⁴³ He 'manages to pitch his rise to power, however, as being embedded in the service

³⁴⁰ Archer, 'Citizens and Aliens', p.46.

³⁴¹ Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.120.

³⁴² Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, ed. by R. L Smallwood and Stanley W. Wells, *The Revels Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), vii.1-5.

³⁴³ Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness*, p.133.

of the city, country, and his craft'.³⁴⁴ Just as Smith had suggested, encouraging 'avarice' in men like Eyre has a positive effect on this fictional 'commonweal'.³⁴⁵

In the immediate aftermath of the 'Dutch Church Libel', Dekker was presenting the uncomplicated value of trading in foreign goods with 'stranger' merchants. Lloyd Edward Kermode explains how, in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* 'the wealth draining problem of the moralities' Hance characters [members of a merchants guild formed out of a league between German towns, centring around Lübeck], and of Usury, Mercadorus, Gerontus, and Lucre in *The Three Ladies* turns into alien support for the commonwealth of England and the stability of a notion of Englishness'.³⁴⁶ However, the 'alien' skipper can only have an effect because of the presence of the Hans/ Lacy character, who effectively contains the threat of the 'stranger' merchant because of the unstable national space that he inhabits. He can deal with the foreign salesman as a national equal, by conversing with him in Dutch, while maintaining his distance from the position of being a 'stranger' merchant himself. Beneath his linguistic and costumed disguise he is an Englishman who is loyal to the mercantile interests of England, who will protect his 'commonweal'.

Eyre is buying a civilised cargo for a cultivated English marketplace that has found a way to contain the threat of the 'stranger' merchant and to enjoy the 'trifles' that he has to trade. The trading strategy and mercantile identity of the 'commonweal' of England was forged out of conflict and anxiety. England's position on the periphery of first European and then global trading fuelled English fears about exploitation from more experienced and better connected 'stranger' merchants. Through these fears England was shown to be vulnerable to its own gullibility. The texts of the second half of the sixteenth century – from Smith's *The Discourse* of 1549; the inventory of 1559 that detailed 'The Particular value of certain necessary and unnecessary Wares brought into the Port of London in the second year of the Queen Majesty's reign, the overquantity whereof most lamentably spoileth the realm yearly'; Walsingham's *Consideration of the Trade into Turkie*; the anonymous and threatening protest of 'The Dutch Church Libel'; and the plays of Wilson, Marlowe and Dekker – can be used to chart the discursive,

³⁴⁴ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.26,

³⁴⁵ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, M2r.

³⁴⁶ Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness*, p.124.

and frequently conflicted, development of values (literal and symbolic) of the economic 'commonweal' of England. The 1559 inventory borrows from Smith when dividing imported wares according to whether they were 'necessary' and 'unnecessary'. Subsequently, Smith's anxieties about 'stranger' merchants are picked up in Wilson's and Marlowe's representations of the characters of Mercadorus and Barabas. Barabas then acts as a source used by the libeller to contextualise their vitriol. Wilson, Marlowe and the Dutch Church libeller refract Smith's rational exploration and the inventory's attempt to locate balance into nightmares. However, in the last year of the century the script changes and is reshaped into the comedic relief of Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*.

There is a consistent thread that connects these texts, which are separated by five decades. While the 'stranger' merchant was acknowledged to be a threat to the 'commonweal' by Smith, his *Discourse* simultaneously recognises forging relationships with 'strangers' as being vital for the 'commonweal' of England. Although, in certain cases, the 'strangers' may be guilty of exporting England's 'necessary' treasure and only bringing spiritually corrupting or mercantilely 'unnecessary' trash and trifles in return, it was impractical and undesirable to close England off from diplomatic and economic relationships that trading offered. Plans began to be formulated that would leave England open to trade but contained, as far as possible, from any ruining potential that might threaten the 'commonweal'. In 1599, Dekker's play presented his audience with a fictional 'commonweal' in which these hopes had been realised.

Following Smith, the humanist writers of 'commonweal' literature – like Andrew Boorde and William Harrison – sought to demystify the notion of an English 'commonweal' by personifying England. Rather than expounding an isolationist policy of blocking trash and trifles, economic theorists began to deploy a protectionist image of the English 'commonweal' that was reliant on humoral theory. The 'commonweal' of England began to be valued not for being impermeable but for being in balance, just as the four humours needed to be balanced in the body, the health of national body of the 'commonweal' required balance. Trash and trifles could be present in the ships, ports and marketplaces of England as long as they were not out of balance with the quantity of treasure in the commonweal. It was believed that reducing the overabundance of a particular

humour could treat bodily sickness, similarly, the health of the English 'commonweal' would depend on finding a way to vent an 'overquantity' of trash and trifles in order to rebalance its humours.

One means to further the 'commonweal' that Smith proposed was a geographical expansion of its boundaries. From Hill Hall, Smith enacted the role of an 'armchair empire builder', his eyes firmly set on lands in Ireland.³⁴⁷ Smith's library and the texts he produced all indicate his interest in colonisation. In turn, Smith's interests can be seen to have influenced the production of his pupils, in particular the work of the translator Richard Eden, who Smith tutored at Cambridge. The record of Smith's library collection of 1567 lists, among a selection of works on extra-European geography, Eden's *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* (1555) and his translation of Martin Cortez's *The Art of Navigation* (1561). In the introduction to the latter Eden paid tribute to his former teacher. While Smith focused on Ireland, those who followed him, like Eden, Richard Hakluyt, Thomas Harriot and John White, looked towards the New World as both a source of treasure and a willing repository for trash and trifles. Religious conflicts within Europe combined with economic and civil unrest in England to fuel an Elizabethan expansionary drive. The twin and often contradictory motives of duty – as followers of the true, reformed religion to keep the New World free from the corrupting influence of papal trash – and desire to increase the power and treasure of England came together in a nascent colonialism that generated a complex literary and artistic tradition. This is the focus of the next chapter.

³⁴⁷ Quinn, 'Beginnings of English Colonial Theory', p.546.

Chapter Three

Valuing Virginia: The 'Commonweal of England' and the New World.

England's position as a peripheral commercial entity fuelled anxiety among the writers of economic and political literature in early modern England. Andrew Boorde and William Harrison expressed this anxiety when they highlighted the threat posed by economic and mercantile imbalances within the 'commonweal' caused by the English appetite for foreign fashions. In doing so they referenced concerns, first raised by Sir Thomas Smith, regarding 'stranger' merchants exploiting the mercantile naivety of the English. However, whereas humanist writers like Smith, Boorde and Harrison had highlighted the vulnerability of the economic 'commonweal' of England, in the second half of the sixteenth century opportunities presented by new global markets and the New World colonial project offered a means to alleviate these concerns.

Smith's *Discourse* had expressed a concern that 'stranger' merchants might treat their Protestant English trading partners 'as men doe litle Children, geeue them an appell for the best Jewell that they haue about them. And thus wee are empouerished of our treasure, & chiefe commodity, and cannot perceiue it, such is the finenesse of straungers wits and the grosenes of ours.'³⁴⁸ However, detailed reports of New World treasure and its childlike and commercially unsophisticated native population had been already been presented to the English reader through Richard Eden's translations of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *Decades of the Newe Worlde* (1555) and *History of Trauayle in the West and East Indies* (1577). In *The Decades* the indigenous people encountered by Columbus are 'recompensed' for 'their gentylnes' – giving their visitors 'plenty of meate and freshe water' – with 'counters, braslettes and garlandes of glasse and counterfecte stoones, lookynge glasses, nedelles, and pynnes, with suche other trashe, whiche seemed vnto them precious marchaundies.'³⁴⁹ This event is recounted, almost identically, in the later

³⁴⁸ Smith, *A Compendious or Briefe Examination*, G3^v.

³⁴⁹ D'Anghiera, *The Decades of the Newe*, Ddi^r.

translation of *The History of Trauayle*; valuable necessities for life – ‘plenty of meate and freshe water’ – are given by these ‘Gentle people’, who are ‘recompensed’ with unnecessary ‘counters, braslettes, and garlands of glasse, and counterfet stones, lookyng glasses, needelles, and pynnes, with suche other trashe, whiche seemed vnto them pretious marchandize.’³⁵⁰ The European adventurer is clearly shown to be the sophisticated mercantile victor in New World exchanges as they receive ‘gentylnes’, ‘meate’ and ‘freshe water’, while they give only ‘trashe’ in return.

The capacity for European mercantile superiority was similarly demonstrated to an English readership just two years after the publication of Smith’s *Discourse*, through the 1583 English translation of Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas’ *The Spanish Colonie* (running title *The Spanish Cruelties*). This translation, which described the native population as ‘these innocent people’ whose ‘wars are no more warres than the playings of children’, allowed English scholars such as Richard Hakluyt and statesmen including Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh to imagine themselves occupying the coveted role of the knowledgeable ‘stranger’ merchant.³⁵¹ Through forging a colonial and trading relationship with the New World, they might ‘vent’ troublesome English trash and profit through the exploitation of these defenceless, naive and childlike trading partners.

In this chapter I will analyse the texts and images relating to the New World produced for an English readership in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.³⁵² These proto-ethnographic texts were engaging travel narratives,

³⁵⁰ Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, *The History of Trauayle in the Vvest and East Indies, and Other Countreys Lying Eyther Way, Towardes the Fruitfull and Ryche Moluccaes As Moscouia, Persia, Arabia, Syria, Ægypte, Ethiopia, Guinea, China in Cathayo, and Giapan: Vvith a Discourse of the Northwest Passage. Gathered in Parte, and Done into Englyshe by Richarde Eden. Newly Set in Order, Augmented, and Finished by Richarde VVilles* (Imprinted at London: By Richarde Iugge, 1577), Pvii^v, From JISC Historical Texts.

³⁵¹ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and Gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, Called the Newe World, for the Space of XI. Yeeres: Written in the Castilian Tongue by the Reuerend Bishop Bartholomew de Las Cases or Casaus, a Friar of the Order of S. Dominicke. And Nowe First Translated into English, by M.M.S.* (Imprinted at London: [By Thomas Dawson] for William Brome, 1583), qq.2^r; A.3^v. From EEBO.

³⁵² The decision to focus on English travel narratives, rather than those of Europe as a whole is supported by Stephen Greenblatt’s claim that the idea of a coherent early modern European narrative tradition is illegitimate, due to ‘the profound differences among the national cultures and religious faiths of the various European voyagers, differences that decisively shaped both perceptions and representations’. Greenblatt further articulates the problem with arguing for the existence of a European travel narrative tradition, by explaining that ‘Catholics and Protestant tended to ask different questions, notice different things, fashion different images... [indeed] there

colonial propaganda, anti-Catholic discourse and pro-Protestant rhetoric, but in every instance the authors of these texts were evaluating the land and people of the New World. By describing the plant and mineral fertility of the land alongside the temperament, religion, civilisation and understanding of the native inhabitants, English authors sought to appraise and ascribe, placing an economic value on these newly discovered lands. The New World was considered rich: however, the childlike nature of the indigenous population rendered them unable to recognise the true value of these materials within the global marketplace. In forging a relationship with the New World, English colonists and merchants could enjoy a position of pre-eminent mercantile knowledge – ‘the English became the clever foreigners.’³⁵³ English trifles and trash could be deposited in the New World in exchange for native treasure.

Yet, English hopes for the New World colonial project were complicated by the fact that, as with European trading networks, the English once again found themselves in the position of latecomers. Following the Spanish sponsored voyage of discovery made by Christopher Columbus in 1492, Henry VII had issued ‘letters patent’ to ‘an adventurous Italian mariner’, John Cabot, in 1497, which granted him:

license to set up our banner and ensigns in every village, town, castle or mainland newly found by them which they can subdue, occupy and possess as our vassals and lieutenants, getting unto us the rule, title and jurisdiction of the same villages, towns, castles and firm land so found.³⁵⁴

However, England’s monarch had made this grant in the aftermath of the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which had divided the jurisdictional claims over the lands and navigational routes of the world between Spain and Portugal through the

had emerged, by the time of the second generation of voyagers to the New World, highly visible divisions, divisions that not only marked the distinction between Catholic and Protestant but cut each of the groups into smaller fragments. Hence it would be possible to differentiate fruitfully between Franciscan and Dominican representations of the New World, and between Calvinist and Lutheran. And then, of course, these distinctions would have been further elaborated with reference to the very considerable differences among national cultures and social classes and professions.’ However, despite these significant cultural and religious differences, it is important to not ‘lose sight of all that was shared by the quite diverse European voyagers to the New World.’ Collections of New World travel literature, even those of ‘staunch’ Protestants like Richard Hakluyt, included accounts by Catholics. [Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.8-9]

³⁵³ Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest*, The New Historicism; 16 (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1994), p.120.

³⁵⁴ Susan P. Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer, eds., *The Literatures of Colonial America: an Anthology* (Malden, Mass; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p.4.

spiritual authority of Pope Alexander VI.³⁵⁵ English merchant adventurers might have hoped to enjoy, for the first time, the position of the experienced 'stranger' merchant, but to do so they would have to circumvent the monopoly that was already held by their mercantile competitors, sometime political enemies and eventual confessional rivals in Christendom.

Although post-Reformation English merchant adventurers might feel justified in questioning the legitimacy of the papal authority behind the Treaty of Tordesillas – which they did through citing the Pope's own Spanish origins as proof of his partiality – that did not negate the financial risk of investing in overseas ventures due to the comparative inferiority of English maritime knowledge and exploratory experience, as well as the possibility of violent reprisals from competitors (Spain in particular).³⁵⁶ As Andrew Hadfield explains, these risk factors meant that '[i]n the sixteenth century many writers and intellectuals argued that energy and time should be concentrated on defending the borders of England and the legacy of the Reformation rather than on squandering precious assets on futile and risky efforts at expansion or travel to distant places.'³⁵⁷ English writers, translators and policy makers who wanted to promote the value of overseas exploration had to confront these anxieties and supersede them with evidence and arguments that would prove the value of the New World project for their own 'commonweal'. This was achieved, in part, through the incorporation of textual evidence and examples from

³⁵⁵ Jerry Brotton has comprehensively explained the impetus behind, and ramifications of, the Treaty of Tordesillas. Brotton explains that the final Treaty of Tordesillas stipulated that: '...a boundary or straight line be determined and drawn north and south, from pole to pole, on the said ocean sea, from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole. This boundary or line shall be drawn straight, at a distance of three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.

All territory to the west of this line fell under the jurisdiction of Castile. All territory to the east was allocated to Portugal...As a result of Columbus' discoveries and the outcome of the Treaty of Tordesillas, it became increasingly imperative for the Portuguese to push on with their search for a navigable route to India before Castile could dispatch new voyages to further erode their claims to the east.' [Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), pp.71-72.] This division, a mark of – what Christopher Hodgkins calls – 'papal globalism', was first challenged '[i]n the 1560s and early 1570s, [by the English Protestant mariners and] seagoing cousins John Hawkins and Francis Drake... [when they sailed] to the Caribbean for trade and plunder.' [Christopher Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature* (Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p.27]

³⁵⁶ Francisco J. Borge, 'We (upon peril of my life) shall make the Spaniard ridiculous to all Europe': Richard Hakluyt's 'Discourse' of Spain' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 167-176, p.174.

³⁵⁷ Andrew Hadfield, 'The Benefits of a Warm Study: The Resistance to Travel before Empire' in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 101-113, p.101.

an older European, Christian tradition, primarily relating to Spanish adventure and discovery, which had begun with the writings of Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas.

The examples provided by Columbus and Las Casas enabled English writers, translators and editors to recount the material benefits of a state sponsored policy of overseas exploration and the disparity between the value systems of the New and Old Worlds. These were currently being enjoyed by Spanish merchant adventurers, and might be easily emulated by the English. Additionally, these texts – particularly in the case of Las Casas – provided first-hand evidence of the cruelty of Catholic Spain in the New World that was at the forefront of the creation of ‘The Black Legend’.³⁵⁸ English compilers of discovery narratives, like Richard Hakluyt, relayed these tales of Spanish cruelty in a calculated attempt to rouse an English reader to support English overseas exploration as a necessary spiritual duty that could prevent the King of Spain from becoming the head of a universal Catholic monarchy.³⁵⁹ Additionally, Hakluyt’s compilation also included positive accounts of English voyages, such as Sir Francis Drake’s discovery and non-violent possession of the goods and land of Nova Albion. According to Hakluyt, in Nova Albion, Drake found ‘a faire and goodly hauen, [where] he landed, and staying there many weeks, and discovering many excellent things in the countrey and great shewe of rich mineral matter, and being offered the dominion of the countrey by the Lord of the same, hee tooke possession thereof in the behalfe of her Maiestie, and named it *Noua Albion*.’³⁶⁰ For Christopher Hodgkins, Drake’s behaviour in Nova Albion, as detailed by Hakluyt, offers the potential to ‘probably trace one of the greatest sustaining legends of the British Empire, the counter to Spain’s *leyenda negra*: the “White Legend” that pious English self-restraint merits possession.’³⁶¹ Protestant

³⁵⁸ ‘The Black Legend’ casts a long literary shadow; it was clearly still resonant well into the seventeenth century since, in *Paradise Lost* (1667), Milton’s Satan acts like a Conquistador. [See: John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Gordon Teskey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), IV, 389-390, p.89; X, 255-261, p.236; Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, p.64; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (California: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp.80-81.

³⁵⁹ Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt, eds., *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p.9.

³⁶⁰ Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.440.

³⁶¹ Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, p.78. See also: Christopher Hodgkins, ‘Stooping to Conquer: Heathen Idolatry and Protestant Humility in the Imperial Legend of Sir Francis Drake’, *Studies in Philology*, 94 (1997), 428-64.

English overseas exploration was thus presented as an antidote to Spain's allegedly violent Catholic imperialism in both the New World and England.³⁶²

In this way the threat of Spain, which formed a large part of the arguments against English pursuits of overseas exploration and trade, was refocused to form evidence of the defensive necessity and financial and spiritual value of those pursuits for the Protestant English commonwealth.³⁶³ This chapter explores the complex, and often contradictory, ways in which the promise and value of material gain was explored in a New World context and used to present the virtue and necessity of English maritime exploration, trade and, eventually, colonisation.³⁶⁴ The growth in English writing, which framed the New World as a location to deposit 'trash' and 'trifles', and obtain 'treasure', is (in part) responsible for the upward trends and peaks in data, beginning in the late 1570s, which are shown in Graphs 1, 2 and 3.

The Race for the New World: Inspiring England's Colonial Literature

Christopher Columbus was evidently aware of the fiscal potential of the New World as he sent letters relating his discovery to the leading economic figures

³⁶² The anti-imperial drive of the 'White Legend' and attacks on Spain was relatively unproblematic as 'long as little England had no actual American colonies... Yet as Protestant England actually began to acquire its first overseas footholds, the sword of the Black Legend proved hard to control. Having made their first exploratory thrusts in the name of reformed and reforming moral order, the English felt the weapon bite and found some blood on their hands.' [Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, p.144]

³⁶³ Brenner's *Merchants and Revolution* offers an in depth account of the complex 'evolution of English commerce in the century after 1550', which challenges 'what has become the traditional interpretation of Tudor-Stuart commercial change, the transformation of English commerce in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was primarily an adaptation to the short-term crises and the secular decline of the traditional export trade in broadcloths with northern Europe.' For Brenner 'this interpretation is seriously misleading....[particularly as t]he rise of the new trades of the Elizabethan era, extending from Morocco, Russia, Persia, and Guinea to Turkey, Venice, and the East Indies was based, from the start, on imports. Merchants were thus moved to found these new trades far less by chronic economic crisis in the cloth export commerce than by the periodic physical disruptions of their traditional trade routes – especially those to the Antwerp and Iberian entrepôts.' While the evolution of English trading during the sixteenth century may not have been as impulsive or reactionary as previously understood it is clear that, within early modern England's travel literature, new trading routes and New World discovery enacted by English merchants and seamen were, in many cases, framed as a victory over Spain's aggressive spiritual and mercantile policies. [Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, p.xi; 4-5.]

³⁶⁴ Borge, 'Richard Hakylut's 'Discourse' of Spain', pp.170-172. Additionally, in this chapter, Borge asserts that 'English North America came into being not just *in spite of* Spain, but, rather, *because of* Spain.' [p.168]

within his patron's government – King Ferdinand's financial secretary, Luis de Santangel, and the Treasurer of Aragon, Gabriel Sanxis.³⁶⁵ In 1493, immediately following his return from the New World, Columbus' *Letter on the Discovery of America* was translated into Latin from the original Spanish (an edition of the Spanish version was printed, in folio, in April 1493).³⁶⁶ The Latin translation was printed in four locations during the same year – Rome, Basel, Paris and Antwerp – thereby enabling an educated, Latinate Christian readership access to a contemporaneous account of this Spanish sponsored discovery of New World lands. Through these Latin editions of the *Letter*, literate Europeans were informed of the valuable gains made by Columbus, 'under the auspices and at the cost of the most invincible Ferdinand, king of Spain.'³⁶⁷ The reward for King Ferdinand's investment was dominion over the newly discovered lands, which Columbus described as being 'fertile' and rich in valuable commodities:

All these islands are very beautiful, and distinguished by various qualities; they are accessible, and full of a great variety of trees stretching up to the stars; the leaves of which I believe are never shed, for I saw them as green and flourishing as they are usually in Spain in the month of May; some of them were blossoming, some were bearing fruit, some were in other conditions; each one was thriving in its own way...This Hispana [Hispaniola or Haiti], moreover, abounds in different kinds of spices, in gold, and in metals.³⁶⁸

The 'thriving' New World described by Columbus, where trees appeared to be evergreen and continuously fruitful, would offer European settlers with a ready supply of food that would help to support their voyages of trade and exploration as they sought out the 'spices', 'gold' and 'metals' that were so valuable in the global marketplace. Columbus' assertions of the value of the commodities discovered during his voyage is a reminder of the implicitly speculative nature of the venture: the Spanish monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, had supported Columbus on the premise that he would discover a route to the treasure-filled markets of the Indies, which avoided the existing, Ottoman controlled, trading routes between Europe

³⁶⁵ Christopher Columbus, *The Latin Letter of Columbus: Printed in 1493 and Announcing the Discovery of America* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893), p.iv.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p.iii.

³⁶⁷ Christopher Columbus, *The Letter on the Discovery of America in The Literatures of Colonial America: An Anthology*, ed. by Susan P. Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer (Malden, Mass; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p.24.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.24-25.

and Asia. Such a discovery would have enabled Spanish merchant adventurers to cut out the Muslim middleman from their trade with the East and enjoy the full profit of their venture. Columbus had to show that his discovery (which he maintained to be a route to the East Indies until his death in 1506) would yield a significant return on his royal patrons' investment. Indeed, Columbus ends *The Letter* with a request for further royal funding, which he guarantees will see a profitable return:

I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible sovereigns with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of chewing gum (which is found only in Chios), also as much of aloes wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their majesties will wish to demand. Likewise rhubarb and other kinds of spices, which I suppose these men whom I left in the said fort have already found and will continue to find.³⁶⁹

The Letter, in manuscript and print, is shaped to highlight the value of the discoveries made in the New World for the Old World and to advertise the colonial project as a profitable area for investment. Merchantable commodities and 'slaves for the navy' that would secure their transit could be easily obtained in the New World.

Additionally, *The Letter* describes the appearance and character of the native inhabitants of King Ferdinand's new lands. Columbus' decision to recount how 'the inhabitants of both sexes go always naked, just as they came into the world' connects the indigenous population to Adam and Eve before The Fall who were 'naked...and were not ashamed.'³⁷⁰ Imagining the New World as another Eden, which became a common trope within later literature of exploration, allowed writers to provide a frame of reference for their readers that emphasised both the financially valuable fecundity of the land and the spiritual treasure of the natives' innocence.

However, by highlighting their nakedness, *The Letter* also presents the infantile naivety of the indigenous population, as naked as they were at birth.³⁷¹ Sir George Peckham saw this lack of clothing as another way to deposit English trifles in the New World; in his *True Report* of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's discovery of

³⁶⁹ Castillo and Schweitzer, eds. *Literatures of Colonial America*, p.26.

³⁷⁰ *King James Bible*, Genesis 2:25.

³⁷¹ Columbus, *Letter on the Discovery of America*, p.25.

Newfoundland Peckham claims that once the 'Sauages, aswell those that dwell in the South... shall begin but a little to taste of ciuility' they 'will take maruelous delight in any garment, be it neuer so simple; as a shirt, a blew, yellow, red, or greene cotton cassocke, a cap, or such like, and will take incredible paines for such a trifle.'³⁷² Further to this, as Elisabeth Louise Roark explains, by '[u]nderscoring the Native Americans' nudity' Columbus' *Letter* would have 'indicated that the Indians were defenceless'.³⁷³ Indeed, alongside their lack of clothing, *The Letter* also advises the reader that the indigenous population of the New World lacks 'every kind of iron' and 'are also without weapons, which indeed are unknown; nor are they competent to use them, not on account of deformity of body, for they are well formed, but because they are timid and full of fear.'³⁷⁴ Being 'without weapons', or the 'iron' to forge them, and 'full of fear' rendered the Native Americans unable to impede the European exploitation of the New World: their martial incapability is used to promote the security and profitability of investing in future voyages.

However, in addition to highlighting the defencelessness and non-violence of the people he encountered, Columbus also describes their guilelessness in mercantile exchange. They are like the 'Children', later described by Smith, who would accept 'an appell for the best Jewell that they haue', since:

³⁷² Hakluyt, *The Principall Nauigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.174.

The naked innocence of the indigenous population, which Joan Pong Linton refers to as 'the Indians "imperfect understanding"', would also be countered with gifts of clothing upon Drake's landing in California during his circumnavigation in 1579. For Linton this was 'a perfect validation of the colonists' deepest desire: the desire to be god, to enjoy the Indians' total submission, body and soul, without confronting the blasphemous implications of their desire. For the fiction disavows English participation or even endorsement, attributing its creation instead to savage idolatry. In this "first encounter," the value of cloth is the enhanced value of Englishmen as gods in "Indian" eyes. More important, the explanatory power that cloth invokes is the originary myth of Eden itself. I refer specifically to the almost identical description in both narratives of how the Englishmen liberally bestow upon Indians necessary things to cover their nakedness. This unmistakable scriptural reference points to the moment after the Fall when Adam and Eve first know shame. Although they devise a garment of fig leaves to cover their nakedness, God teaches them instead the use of animal skins. The Edenic reference invokes a biblical typology in which God's clothing of the fallen couple finds repetition and fulfillment in the colonists' clothing of Indians. In the process, the English not only impose their sense of shame on the Indians but, by construing the latter as fallen, invent for themselves the mission of saving souls.' [Joan Pong Linton, 'Jack of Newbery and Drake in California: Domestic and Colonial Narratives of English Cloth and Manhood', *ELH*, 59 (1992), 23-51, p.41]

³⁷³ Elisabeth Louise Roark, *Artists of Colonial America* (Westport, Conn; London: Greenwood Press, 2003), p.9.

³⁷⁴ Columbus, *Letter on the Discovery of America*, p.25.

They showed greater love for all others than for themselves; they give valuable things for trifles, being satisfied even with a very small return, or with nothing; however, I forbade that things so small and of no value should be given to them, such as pieces of plates, dishes and glass, likewise keys and shoe-straps; although if they were able to obtain these, it seemed to them like getting the most beautiful jewels in the world... They also traded cotton and gold for pieces of bows, bottles, drugs and jars, like persons without reason...³⁷⁵

The Native Americans were naked, unarmed and without the capacity to differentiate 'valuable things' from 'trifles': they were only saved from economic exploitation because Columbus determined that to do so would be morally 'very wrong'.³⁷⁶ The native population displays inherent virtue, without knowledge of the teachings of Christ who commanded his followers to 'love one another': they 'showed greater love for all others than for themselves'.³⁷⁷ Indeed, it was Columbus' fellow Christian Europeans that required direction to prevent them exploiting the selfless innocence of these people, who joyfully accept valueless, useless and occasionally broken things – what in England would have been designated as trash – as though they were 'the most beautiful jewels in the world'. Despite Columbus' claim that he 'forbade' such imbalanced trading, the reader is informed that slight wares, such as 'pieces of bows, bottles, drugs and jars', were exchanged for the natives' valuable materials ('cotton and gold'). Although Columbus asserts that such behaviour seemed to him to be 'very wrong', he still appears keen to present the ways in which the disparity in values between the Old and New World could benefit Spain and Europe; through the 'very wrong' exploitation of native commercial naivety, necessary and valuable commodities like cotton and gold could be obtained in exchange for Europe's 'trifles' and trash, generating massive profit in the process.

Columbus' description of this native New World population's divergent comprehension of mercantile valuation is evidence of an extraordinary inequality at the foundation of early capitalism, which would subsequently become a recurrent feature in European literatures of discovery, expansion and, eventually, colonialism. Through presenting a profound disparity in value systems between the inhabitants of the New and Old Worlds – between an experienced mercantile

³⁷⁵ Columbus, *Letter on the Discovery of America*, p.25.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ *King James Bible*, John 13:34.

entity and their less commercially astute trading partners – these European literatures shaped a fantasy of capitalist acquisitiveness, which fuelled the desire, among various European nations, to occupy the position of arbiters of value in the New World. As Smith's *Discourse* demonstrates, the awareness of the potential to exploit a disparity in valuation also stimulated English anxieties and, subsequently, their desire to make similar strides in exploration and expansion into the lands of the New World.

Columbus' *Letter* is an advert for colonial exploration and investment, where the natural resources of the New World are placed alongside the childlike character of the native population as evidence of the value of the project.³⁷⁸ Later English authors such as Thomas Harriot, who wrote *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia of the Commodities and of the Nature and Manners of the Naturall Inhabitants* (1588), would describe the New World and its inhabitants in similar ways.³⁷⁹ The colonial literature of early modern England, like that of the other European colonial nations, valued the New World as a site where treasure ('spices', 'gold', 'metals' and 'cotton') could be exchanged for Europe's trash and 'trifles' ('pieces of plates, dishes and glass, likewise keys and shoe-straps...pieces of bows, bottles, drugs and jars').

While *The Letter* offered the literate reader and author a formula with which they could describe the value of investing in the New World colonial project, the work of Bartolomé de Las Casas became the foundation for Protestant English arguments about the righteousness of supplanting Spanish claims to the New

³⁷⁸ In terms of assessing the veracity of the various early modern European descriptions of the inhabitants and commodities they discovered in New World, Stephen Greenblatt recommends caution and asserts that while the European voyagers to the New World may not have been 'steady liars' they were 'frequent and cunning liars none the less, whose position virtually required the strategic manipulation and distortion and outright suppression of the truth.' He explains that a contemporary reader of these accounts must acknowledge that 'it is particularly tempting to take the most admiring descriptions of the 'Indians' as if they were transparent truths and to reserve epistemological suspicion for the most hostile accounts, but this strategy produces altogether predictable, if sentimentally appealing, results. We can be certain only that European representations of the New World tell us something about the European practice of representation'. When analysing these descriptions then, it is necessary to take the potential motivations of the writer into account; therefore, assertions of the Edenic fecundity of the New World and the naïve gentleness of its inhabitants should be read as an attempt to present the value of New World exploration through the presentation of positive accounts or the placing of a positive bias onto lived experiences. [Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p.7]

³⁷⁹ Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia of the Commodities There Found and to Be Rayzed, as Well Marchantable, as Others for Victuall, Building and Other Necessarie Vses for Those That Are and Shalbe the Planters There; and of the Nature and Manners of the Naturall Inhabitants* (Imprinted at London: [By R. Robinson], 1588), A1^r. From EEBO.

World. Indeed, as Christopher Hodgkins explains, 'English literature about empire has turned with strange constancy to religious themes of worship and idolatry, atrocity and deliverance, slavery and service, conversion, prophecy, apostasy, and doom.'³⁸⁰ Through Las Casas early modern England's proto-colonial literature of travel and exploration gained an early source for these religious themes. Although Las Casas was Spanish, having been born and educated in Sevilla, he is credited with being 'the principle creator of the "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty in the colonization of the New World.'³⁸¹ At the start of his adult life Las Casas was an active participant in Spain's colonial experiment: in 1502 he left Spain for Hispaniola, then, in 1513, he took part in the colonisation of Cuba.³⁸² However, events in Cuba disturbed Las Casas and damaged his faith in the morality of colonisation and, from 1515, he spent the rest of his life campaigning for better treatment for the Native Americans.³⁸³

In 1552 Las Casas' *Brevíssima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias* was published 'in the Castillian tongue': the text was subsequently translated into English and published in 1583 as *The Spanish Colonie, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and Gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, called the Newe World, for the space of xl. yeeres* but it was also known as *The Spanish Cruelties*.³⁸⁴ As with *The Letter*, Las Casas' text describes the indigenous population of the New World as naive and childlike. As Harry Culverwell Porter has pointed out: '[f]undamentally, Las Casas thought of the Indian as a child of ten or twelve years old'.³⁸⁵ Like Columbus, Las Casas informs the reader of the vulnerability of the indigenous population of the New World by detailing their nudity, stating that: '[t]heir appareling is commonly to goe naked: all saue their shamefast partes alone couered.'³⁸⁶ For Las Casas, the Natives are not indecorous; they have simply not had need of greater coverings because of the mildness of both the climate and their countrymen.

As with Columbus' *Letter*, Las Casas' description of the nudity of the indigenous populations in *The Spanish Cruelties* holds Edenic connotations. Las Casas

³⁸⁰ Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, p.2.

³⁸¹ Castillo and Schweitzer, eds. *Literatures of Colonial America*, p.27.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, q1^r-q2^r.

³⁸⁵ Harry Culverwell Porter, *The Inconstant Savage: England and the North American Indian, 1500-1660* (London: Duckworth, 1979), p.157.

³⁸⁶ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, A1^v.

describes the Native Americans as a 'peaceable, lowly & milde nation which offendeth none' and as 'these lambes so mecke, so qualified & endewed of their maker and creator'.³⁸⁷ Indeed, like the Biblical Adam and Eve, Las Casas asserts that the people of the New World had been placed in this 'great and most fertile Isle' by God's design:

It seemeth that God hath bestowed in that same countrey, the gulfhe or the greatest portion of mankind. GOD created all these innumerable multitudes in euery sorte, very simple, without sutteltie, or craft, without malice, very obedient.³⁸⁸

Within this New World Eden, 'the gulfhe or the greatest portion of mankind' was maintained in a state of 'simple' and 'very obedient' virtue. Further to this, Las Casas states that '[t]heir diet is such (as it seemeth) y^t of the holy fathers in the desert hath not been more scarce, nor more streight, nor lesse daintie, nor lesse sumptuous.'³⁸⁹ Thus, the New World and its inhabitants are presented as a model of early biblical innocence, a profitable spiritual example for wayward European Christians; they would exist in absolute spiritual perfection, 'if onely they knewe God.'³⁹⁰ Through worshiping 'Idolles', in the way of heathens, the natives showed their separation from the real spiritual treasure of Christianity.³⁹¹ The natives can teach innocence to the Europeans but they also needed to be brought into the fold of Christendom in order for that innocence to realise its full spiritual value.

Catholic writers attempted to assert the necessity of exploration and expansion by calling attention to the spiritual value of bringing the inhabitants of the New World away from the religious trash of their heathen 'Idolles', alongside the mercantile value that such evangelism might bring to their own nation. When Protestant writers made similar arguments, they would point to the spiritual necessity of removing the natives from their valueless practise of worshiping heathen 'Idolles', but they also highlighted the danger of not protecting these innocent people from the damaging influence of Spanish expansion, which brought physical cruelty and exchanged one set of spiritually worthless trash for another.

³⁸⁷ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, CC3^r; A1^v.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, A1^r.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, A1^v.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, F2^r.

The difficulty for those authors who were contributing to a literature of discovery that gave equal weighting to economic and spiritual matters lay in forcing together motivations that had been viewed as destructively incompatible. When calling for religious reform, the mercantile had been positioned as a destructively devaluing spiritual infection; now these New World dealings were being overlaid with a veneer of spirituality. Christian writers sought a way to combine the spiritual with the economic in a way that maintained the separateness and legitimacy of both spheres. Columbus stated that he gave the native inhabitants:

many beautiful and pleasing things that I had brought with me...in order that I might the more easily make them friendly to me, that they might be made worshippers of Christ...that they might be zealous to search out and collect, and deliver to us those things of which they had plenty, and which we greatly needed.³⁹²

Material goods are tools to convert the natives, initiating a process which ultimately results in greater material wealth being made available to 'our king, our queen, and prince, and the whole Spanish nation'.³⁹³ Equally, for Las Casas, the inhabitants of the New World were 'verye apt to receiue our holy Catholique faith', which would have offered the Spanish colonisers the potential to store up spiritual treasure through proselytising to, and converting, non-Christian people.³⁹⁴ At the same time, Las Casas used his text to advertise the material wealth available in Hispaniola – it was 'very rich of golde', with the king of the realm ('*Guarionex*') being so 'well affectioned to the deuotion of the kings of Castile' that he provided a 'Dromme [half] full of golde'.³⁹⁵ Knowledge of God, according to Las Casas, would make 'these folkes...the happiest in the world', which when coupled with proper treatment would maintain and potentially increase their materially profitable affection for the kings of Castile.

The Spanish colonisers, however, conducted themselves like 'tyrantes', being guilty of both wrath and greed, since they 'thinke it nothing to do wrong, to shed such abundance of mans blood...to purloyne such incredible treasures'.³⁹⁶ While the Native Americans were virtuous 'lambs', the Spaniards showed themselves to

³⁹² Castillo and Schweitzer, eds., *Literatures of Colonial America*, p.25.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, A1^v.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., A4^v.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., CC3^r-CC3^v.

be 'as wolues, as lions, & as tigres most cruel of long time famished'.³⁹⁷ The barbarity shown by the Spaniards, as reported in *The Spanish Cruelties*, seems to deliberately disregard the Biblical warning, found in Matthew 16.26, which I referred to in Chapter One: 'What shall it proffet a man though he shulde wyne all the whoole worlde: yf he loose his owne soule?'³⁹⁸

Columbus, through *The Letter*, spoke of the need for moral mercantile dealing with the indigenous population, since he explained that he had to forbid 'that things so small and of no value should be given to them' because to do so would be 'very wrong'. Similarly, through the *The Spanish Cruelties*, Las Casas asserts that the price of this native treasure was the death of the indigenous people and the simultaneous ruin of the explorer's spiritual wealth – the virtue once contained within their souls. As Las Casas explains, 'that Spaine was as it were replenished with gold, of the finest that came from the Ile Hispaniola: the same had been only drawen out of the entrals of the earth by the Indians, of the mines, aforesaid, wher they died'.³⁹⁹ Las Casas spoke out against the violence of his fellow explorers, for the sake of their own souls; however, he did not question the ethics of discovery, expansion, colonialism or even the exploitation of the lands of the New World for its commodities.⁴⁰⁰ The crown of Castile could claim dominion over the land and people in order to 'drawe golde out of the mines': it was the devaluing of the native people and their rape and murder that must be 'redressed'.⁴⁰¹

Spain taught English writers how to value the New World, not only through its cruelties, but also through its material gains. Robert Brenner explains that 'English

³⁹⁷ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*. A1^v.

³⁹⁸ Tyndale Bible, Matthew, 16.26.

³⁹⁹ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, C1^v.

⁴⁰⁰ Las Casas' anxiety over Spanish treatment of the indigenous population of the New World was not unrecognisable to his fellow countrymen. More details on the religious, literary and cultural effects of these Spanish concerns can be found in Anthony Pagden's essay, 'Dispossessing the Barbarian'. Pagden explains that '[i]n 1537 the Spanish Dominican Francisco de Vitoria, Prime Professor of Theology at the University of Salamanca, delivered a lecture entitled *De indis* whose purpose was, he declared, to discover 'by what right the barbarians' – by which he meant the American Indians – 'had come under the rule of the Spaniards... What was at issue in the prolonged debates over the conquest of the Americas was not the Castilian crown's sovereignty in America (no one, not even Bartolomé de las Casas, the 'Apostle to the Indians' and the most radical defender of their interests, denied that) it was the nature of the rights and, in particular, rights of property, which that sovereignty entailed... Their project [Vitoria and his pupils] was to create a moral philosophy based upon an Aristotelian and Thomist interpretation of the law of nature.' [Anthony Pagden, 'Dispossessing the Barbarian: The Language of Spanish Thomism and the Debate over the Property Rights of the American Indians', in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 79-98, pp.79-80].

⁴⁰¹ Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie*, CC2^v; A4^v.

merchants... were motivated to expand English commercial horizons by the desire to emulate and, ultimately, to displace the Spanish and Portuguese in their trades for gold, spices, and other commodities' from the Americas.⁴⁰² The presentation of the Native Americans as childlike and economically naive created a literary tradition among later English writers of colonial literature, in which these native people were valued for an innocence which would make them willing and eager to accept England's trifles and trash in exchange for their treasure, which in turn provided a means to ensure economic balance within the English 'commonweal'. The early literature of the discovery of the New World, produced by Catholics in response to Catholic successes, formed a foundation for the authors, editors and compilers of texts that sought to inspire Protestant England's government and people to support and pursue their own voyages. Indeed, in 1584 – the year after the publication of the English translation of Las Casas' *Spanish Cruelties* – Richard Hakluyt, an Anglican clergyman and one of the most prolific producers of Protestant discovery literature in English, presented Queen Elizabeth with a copy of his manuscript: *A Particular Discourse Concerning the Great Necessitie and Mainfolde Commodities that are like to Growe to this Realme of Englande by the Western Discoveries Lately Attempted (or The Discourse of Western Planting)*.⁴⁰³

Anthony Payne explains that *The Discourse of Western Planting* 'was designed to secure royal support for North American colonization' but that it 'was not primarily a mercantile affair and received much of its financial backing from landed wealth: the amount of investment required in such projects and the slow returns were not attractive to City financiers.'⁴⁰⁴ Certainly, Hakluyt's design would not have generated the short-term profits of investing in an individual voyage with the sole aim of gathering up valuable commodities for sale in the European marketplace. Yet, as David and Alison Quinn have pointed out, Hakluyt argued for

⁴⁰² Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, p.45.

⁴⁰³ Despite his membership of the clergy, '[r]eligion shaped little, if any, of Hakluyt's corpus, either generically or rhetorically...He published no sermons, intervened directly in no religious polemics and wrote no biblical commentary. The most direct institutional source of his commitments was not the Elizabethan Church but rather the Clothworkers' Company. The company paid Hakluyt an annual pension from 1578 to 1586 even when he was stationed in Paris as chaplain to the English ambassador, Sir Edward Stafford, on and off between 1585 and 1588.' [David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, Ideas in Context ; 59 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.71.]

⁴⁰⁴ Anthony Payne, 'Hakluyt's London: Discovery and Overseas Trade' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p.21.

the long-term financial security that would result from the formation of 'well-distributed settlements of Englishmen before the French and Spanish developed their own footholds and so excluded the English.'⁴⁰⁵ However, England's failure (through a combination of ineptitude and indifference) to conquer and hold land in the New World ultimately provided Hakluyt, and his fellow promoters of English explorations, to define their country 'in opposition to Spanish tyranny, Spanish cruelty, and Spanish ambition', since '[i]f Spain's behavior in the New World has given conquest a bad name, trade has not been similarly tainted...The pursuit of trade rather than conquest becomes a sign of England's virtuous difference.'⁴⁰⁶ In this context, the disposal of England's mercantile trash and trifles in the New World could thus be framed as a righteous alternative to the Catholic tyranny of Spanish colonialism.

Hakluyt, using Las Casas' text as a source of evidence, explains that, because of the 'moste outeragious and infinite massacres...greate matters may be brought about by our nation' – he argues that if Elizabeth 'would put in a foote in that enterprise, and assist the revolted Indians' she 'may bringe kinge Phillippe from his highe Throne and make hym equall to the Princes his neighboures'.⁴⁰⁷ Thus, Hakluyt's *Discourse* offered a remedy for the combined spiritual and mercantile issues that faced Protestant England in the 1580s. His desire to seek out which 'speciall meanes may bringe kinge Phillippe from his highe Throne and make hym equall to the Princes his neighboures' was of particular interest in a decade in which Anglo-Spanish tensions increased, with damaging trade embargos being placed upon Protestant English merchants.⁴⁰⁸ The Protestant English, like the Native Americans, were oppressed by Spanish Catholic imperialism and, in consequence, Hakluyt's collections of English travel narratives about the New

⁴⁰⁵ Richard Hakluyt, *A Particuler Discourse Concerninge the Greate Necessitie and Manifold Commodities That Are Like to Growe to This Realme of Englande by the Western Discoveries Lately Attempted, Written in the Yere 1584*, ed. by Alison M. Quinn and David Beers Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1993), p.xxvii.

⁴⁰⁶ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.185.

⁴⁰⁷ Hakluyt, *A Particuler Discourse*, p.55; 41.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p.41. As Francisco J. Borge explains, English merchants had been made to 'renounce their Protestant faith – or, at least, to give the appearance of doing so – in order to be allowed to trade in Spanish-controlled ports'; Spanish hegemony meant that English merchants were forced to choose between their spiritual values and mercantile prosperity [Borge, 'Richard Hakluyt's 'Discourse' of Spain', p.172.]

World contained arguments that promoted the moral necessity of liberating the people of the New World from both the papal and Spanish yoke.

Hakluyt's *Discourse*, taking influence from earlier European literature of discovery, merges the mercantile, the spiritual and the political to call for the development of a government-backed policy of colonial expansion. English writers, like Richard Hakluyt and Thomas Harriot, and artists, like John White, shaped their texts to highlight the moral imperatives, commercial value and political necessity of investing in New World discovery and colonial projects, which began to shape the imperial identity of the English 'commonweal'. As the rest of this chapter will show, these English writers and artists consistently highlighted the capacity of English trash and trifles to be used to form positive relationships with the native inhabitants of the New World. The peaks in the numbers of printed texts that feature the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' that occurred in the last decades of the sixteenth century (Graphs 1, 2 and 3) correlates with the publication of English texts in support of exploration and colonialism – England's New World literature depended upon the lexicon of valuation (mercantile and spiritual) that featured the terms 'trash' and 'trifle'.

Shaping the English Commonweal: The Idea of Empire

In 1576 English hopes of seafaring success were raised through Martin Frobisher's first of three voyages in search of the Northwest Passage. Just as Columbus, with the support of the Spanish monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand, had sought out a new trade route to the East that bypassed Ottoman control, it was hoped that Frobisher's voyage would locate another route to the East (specifically Cathay and the East Indies) that would circumvent Spanish controls. These endeavours, nearly a hundred years apart, are strikingly similar. In both cases they mingle mercantile and spiritual concerns, since they were both designed to alleviate a mercantile problem that was caused by religious difference – Columbus hoped to free European Christian merchants from the financially damaging control of the Muslim Ottomans; Frobisher intended to strike a Protestant blow to the economic stranglehold of Catholicism. Neither voyage achieved its intended goal: but while

Columbus' failure to locate a new trade route to the Indies was mediated by the discovery of America (with its profitable supply of natural resources and precious materials), it would swiftly become evident that Frobisher's voyages had failed to find anything of value at Baffin Island.

Over Frobisher's three consecutive voyages, spanning three years, the Northwest Passage had still not been found: instead all that could be shown, in 1578, for the considerable labour and expense was between 1500-2000 tons of trash – worthless black rock. Frobisher had picked up a small piece of this rock during his first voyage, which he valued, according to George Best's *A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discoverie, for the Finding of a Passage to Cathaya, by the Northvveast* (1578), as 'a thing of no accompt, in the iudgement of the Captain at the first sight. And yet for nouelty it was kept, in respect of the place from whence it came.'⁴⁰⁹ This souvenir apparently came to the hands of 'a gentlewoman, one of y^e aduenturers wiues' who, by burning a piece of the rock and then quenching it in vinegar, found that 'it glistered with a bright Marquesset of golde.'⁴¹⁰ Assays of the rock began and despite having no conclusive results for the presence of gold within it, the focus of Frobisher's project shifted. Another voyage was commissioned for the following year, which was 'more speciallye derected... for the searching more of this golde Ore, than for the searching any further discoverie of the passage.'⁴¹¹

The unwavering belief that gold would be found in this ore should, perhaps, be attributed to desperation on the part of England's merchant adventurers to replicate the economic success of the Spanish, who continued to be enriched by the

⁴⁰⁹ George Best, *A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discoverie, for the Finding of a Passage to Cathaya, by the Northvveast, Vnder the Conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall Deuided into Three Bookes. In the First Wherof Is Shewed, His First Voyage ... Also, There Are Annexed Certayne Reasons, to Proue All Partes of the Worlde Habitable, with a Generall Mappe Adioyned. In the Second, Is Set Out His Second Voyage ... In the Thirde, Is Declared the Strange Fortunes Which Hapned in the Third Voyage ... VVith a Particular Card Therevnto Adioyned of Meta Incognita* (At London: Imprinted by Henry Bynnyman, seruant to the right Honourable Sir Christopher Hatton Vizchamberlaine, Decembris. 10 1578), p.51. Like Frobisher, Best is also best known as an explorer. However, R. C. D. Baldwin explains that '[s]urviving financial accounts show George Best did not...sail with Martin Frobisher in 1576, although he did write about the journey.' He was on board the *Ayde* on Frobisher's second voyage in 1577 because of his skill with celestial navigation and commanded the *Anne Francis* during the third, and final voyage of 1578. (R. C. D. Baldwin, 'Best, George (c.1555-1584)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Jan 2008 [accessed 16 July 2013] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2289>>)

⁴¹⁰ George Best, *A True Discourse*, p.51.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.52.

gold and silver of the New World. This desire is most evident in Best's assertion that the Inuit 'greatly delighted in our toyes', following Columbus' description of the Native American love of 'trifles'.⁴¹² Best explains that they willingly 'exchaunged coates of Ceale, and Beares skinnnes' for 'belles, loking glasses, and other toyes'.⁴¹³ If nothing else, perhaps this land could provide a location for English merchant adventurers to vent their low-value trifles or 'toyes' in exchange for valuable and marketable animal skins. When this trade was coupled with the belief in the gold content of the black rock that had been discovered at Baffin Island it was possible to imagine the investors in the voyages seeing a considerable return on their money; it was even possible that the plantation of a permanent mining or trading outpost on the island would be able to rival the gains made by Spain in the New World.

Unfortunately, while Best was preparing his account of Frobisher's three voyages for publication in 1578, the final verdict on the value of the black ore also appeared – having had around £25,000 invested in its discovery and transportation, the rock was eventually found to contain no gold, silver or, indeed, anything of any value.⁴¹⁴ 'The 1,296 tons of ore that Frobisher brought back from Meta Incognita was fool's gold', no better than the trash and trifles that England wished to purge itself of.⁴¹⁵ To make matters worse, the northern lands that Frobisher had found could not be presented as a potentially valuable geographical acquisition for the English commonwealth. While 'these colde regions' might be 'habitable' they were not presented as the equal of the fertile, temperate and Edenic paradise presented in Columbus' and Las Casas' accounts of the New World.⁴¹⁶ Similarly, while the indigenous population of the Spanish discovered New World were found to be childlike and loving, Frobisher's men encountered 'subtile traytours' and 'deceiurers' – Best recounts how 'fiue of [the] men going a shoare, were by them intercepted with their boate, and were neuer since hearde of to this day againe'.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹² George Best, *A True Discourse*, p.49.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ James McDermott, 'Lok, Michael (c.1532-1620/22)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Jan 2008 [accessed 16 March 2011] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16950>>

⁴¹⁵ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p.118.

⁴¹⁶ George Best, *A True Discourse*, p.38.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p.49.

The Frobisher venture had sought out and received investments on the basis of the surety of large returns rather than the proof thereof; effectively, the investment was a gamble that failed to pay off. The sense of disappointment caused by this failure – a response to dreams of New World wealth and fantasies of exploiting the disparity between New and Old World valuations that were unquestioningly pursued – severely damaged Frobisher's reputation: the investors, including the parsimonious queen, had lost their money (around £4000 in the case of Elizabeth); one of the principal investors and promoters of Frobisher's voyages, the private citizen Michael Lok was left bankrupt and found himself residing in one of London's many debtors prisons.⁴¹⁸ Lost in new systems of valuation and the potential for massive profits they incorporated, the English did not yet grasp the economic realities with which they were faced in this new world. Instead of treasure they had found only trash.

It was perhaps fortunate that Francis Drake had secured funding from investors including Sir Francis Walsingham and Queen Elizabeth and set off for his circumnavigation of the globe in November 1577, just two months before the commencement of the series of assays that would fail to locate any precious metals within Frobisher's black rock.⁴¹⁹ Had Drake attempted to mount the same voyage a year later it is likely that he would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to secure sufficient investment for the voyage. On 26th September 1580 Drake returned, from his voyage of circumnavigation, 'with a cargo worth a fortune, having turned a serious profit on his expedition. His financial backers recovered their investment many times over, while the Queen took a share that almost doubled her annual income.'⁴²⁰

Descriptions of Sir Francis Drake's next expedition (1585-6), which struck at Spanish colonies in the Cape Verde Islands, by Walter Bigges (1589), Baptista Boazio (1589) and Richard Hakluyt (1599-1600) presents a hierarchy of New World merchandise; 'wine, oile, meale, and some other such like things for victuall,

⁴¹⁸ James McDermott, 'Frobisher, Sir Martin (1535?-1594)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Jan 2008 [accessed 16 March 2011] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10191>>; McDermott, 'Lok, Michael (c.1532-1620/22)'.

⁴¹⁹ Harry Kelsey, 'Drake, Sir Francis (1540-1596)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, Oct 2009 [accessed 17 July 2013] <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8022>>

⁴²⁰ Kelsey, 'Drake, Sir Francis (1540-1596)'; MacGregor, *Restless World*, pp.7-8.

as vineger, oliues & some other trash' are described as 'such spoiles as the place yelded' that were only useful or valuable 'as merchandise for their Indian trades.'⁴²¹ These descriptions proceed to differentiate these victuals from things of value, the accounts of Bigges, Boazio and Hakluyt assert that 'there was not found any treasure at all, or any thing else of worth besides.'⁴²² Items that were only suitable for 'victuall' or 'merchandise for their Indian trades' are akin to so much 'other trash' since they do not compare with the gold, silver, jewels and pearls that had become the expected return of New World exploration. However, because they are made in reference to Spanish colonial holdings, these accounts also hint at the valuelessness of the colonial project of Catholic Spain.

These descriptions are, however, a clear departure from the 1555 and 1577 English translations of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *Decades of the Newe Worlde* and *History of Trauayle in the West and East Indies* where gifts of victuals ('plenty of meate and freshe water') are viewed as evidence of 'gentilnes' to be rewarded, albeit with European 'trash'. The accounts of Drake's voyage also present a search for the kind of short-term profits that Hakluyt's *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584) sought to dissuade; by publishing this more materially driven account in the *Principall Navigations* (1599-1600) Hakluyt tempered the (plantation at all costs) approach of his earlier material. Perhaps Hakluyt had come to terms with appealing to what Jeffrey Knapp described as, 'his insular readers [who] could only with the greatest difficulty be convinced to pursue more than piratical ventures in search of American gold'.⁴²³ Certainly, while the value ascribed to victuals in these earlier accounts speaks to a desire to promote a colonial drive in relation to the New World; Drake's later martial voyage, as described in the later accounts, is concerned with exploiting and exporting the valuable materials of the New World rather than settling the land.

⁴²¹ Walter Bigges, *A Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Frances Drakes VVest Indian Voyage Wherein Were Taken, the Townes of Saint Iago, Sancto Domingo, Cartagena & Saint Augustine* (Imprinted at London: By Richard Field, dwelling in the Blacke-Friars by Ludgate, 1589), p.13; Baptista Boazio, *The Famouse West Indian Voyage Made by the Englishe Fleete of 23 Shippes and Barkes Wherin Weare Gotten the Townes of St. Iago: Sto Domingo, Cartagena and St Augustines the Same Beinge Begon from Plimmouth in the Moneth of September 1585 and Ended at Portesmouth in Iulie 1586 the Whole Course of the Saide Viadge Beinge Plainlie Described by the Pricked Line Newlie Come Forth by Baptista B* (London? s.n, 1589), p.13; Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.537.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere*, p.14.

Drake's circumnavigation of the globe and his plundering of the Cape Verde Islands 'held great symbolic value not only because of the technical achievement of replicating Magellan but also because as war dragged on with the Spanish and various Elizabethan colonization schemes consistently failed, even in nearby Ireland, they suggested a tangible way of grounding the national autonomy of England and realizing its imagined global status.'⁴²⁴ It was in the wake of Drake's successes, during the last decades of the sixteenth century that an English literature of exploration, expansion and exportation regarding the New World took shape and gathered pace. This literature pressed for Protestant English dominance in the New World, reported the successes of English voyages there and highlighted the spiritual and mercantile value that would be gained through similar endeavours; the authors of this literature utilised the terms in the lexicon of valuation – 'trash', 'trifle', 'treasure' and their cognates – to achieve this. Richard Hakluyt assumed a position at the vanguard of the development of this literature, which was influenced by (and frequently included) accounts of the discoveries made by other nations and the earlier political discourse of men like Sir Thomas Smith that related to the furthering of the English commonwealth.

Valuing the New World: Inspiring Exploration and Discovery

Throughout the later decades of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the work of Richard Hakluyt was perhaps the most influential and informative documentation of exploratory and proto-colonial enterprise:

⁴²⁴ Robert K. Batchelor, *London: The Selden Map and the Making of a Global City, 1549-1689* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), p.68. See also: Theodore K. Rabb's assertion that 'Drake's circumnavigation represented 'England's emergence as a potential power on the high seas, as a dangerous rival to Spain, and as a possible competitor for the wealth of the East. But Englishmen could draw a more immediate lesson from Drake's successful return...The display of courage they might have expected, but the booty was unprecedented.' [Theodore K. Rabb, *Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575-1630*, The Emergence of International Business, 1200-1800; v.3 (London: Routledge, 1999), p.20.] Further to this Claire Jowitt views Drake's circumnavigation as potentially the most important voyage 'in the history of England's attempt to fashion a maritime empire, and trade networks, to rival Spain's territories in the New World. Since England came late to the theatre of empire, piracy played an important role in the imperial project, and to gain imperial wealth or colonial territory the English had to scrap and plunder.' [Claire Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.50.]

indeed, Castillo and Schweitzer assert that his work was '[c]entral to the English endeavor'.⁴²⁵ Through compiling, editing, translating and publishing sources of travel literature from across Europe, Hakluyt provided his fellow countrymen access to documentary evidence, in their vernacular tongue, of the 'honour and benefit of this Common weale wherein I liue and breathe'.⁴²⁶ The specific target for his texts was Queen Elizabeth, who he hoped would support the colonial enterprise if she were made aware of the twin benefits that could be achieved, of furthering reformed religion, while also replacing the trash and trifles of the 'common wealth' with treasure from the New World.⁴²⁷ By 1582 he had prepared the *Diuers voyages touching the discoverie of America*, which set down not just the reasons and manner in which North America should be colonised by the English but also presented their right to do so since, as he states later in the title the discovery had, in fact been '*made first of all by our Englishmen, and afterward by the French-men and Britons*' – the Spaniards and their claims to America being studiously ignored.⁴²⁸ Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt explain that from this, his earliest publication, Hakluyt strove to create collections of 'records and documents' that would 'consolidate the legitimacy and viability of English plans to expand in North America'.⁴²⁹

Yet writings about Spain's New World discovery, of the kind produced by Columbus and Las Casas, clearly influenced Hakluyt's cousin (Richard Hakluyt the Elder) as he produced his *Inducements to the liking of the Voyage intended towards Virginia in 40 and 42 degrees of latitude*, written in 1585, three years after his

⁴²⁵ Castillo and Schweitzer, eds., *Literatures of Colonial America*, p.6.

⁴²⁶ Hakluyt, *The Principall Nauigations* (1599-1600), *4r.

⁴²⁷ Peter C. Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p.4.

⁴²⁸ Richard Hakluyt, *Diuers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America, and the Ilands Adjacent Vnto the Same Made First of All by Our Englishmen, and Afterward by the Frenchmen and Britons: And Certaine Notes of Aduertisements for Obseruations, Necessarie for Such as Shall Heereafter Make the Like Attempt, with Two Mappes Annexed Heereunto for the Plainer Vnderstanding of the Whole Matter* (Imprinted at London: [By Thomas Dawson] for Thomas VVoodcocke, dwelling in paules Church-yard, at the signe of the blacke beare, 1582), Titlepage. From EEBO. Margaret Small explains this studious decision to ignore the lands claimed by Spain in the New World as being the result of the 'great political tension with Spain', which was a particular feature of the 1580s; due to this 'tension... Hakluyt dared not promote English expansion into areas which Spain had already claimed.' [Margaret Small, 'A World Seen Through Another's Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of the *Navigazioni et Viaggi*' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 45-56, p.52.]

⁴²⁹ Carey and Jowitt, *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing*, p.2.

cousin's *Diuers voyages touching the discoverie of America*, in which he sets down thirty-one 'ends of this voyage', with the thirty-first arguing that Virginia would offer:

not only...many precious commodities besides from thence, but also shall in time find ample vent of the labor of our poor people at home, by sale of hats, bonnets, knives, fish hooks, copper kettles, beads, looking glasses, bugles and a thousand kinds of other wrought wares, that in short time may be brought in use among other people of that country, to the great relief of the multitude of our poor people, and to the wonderful enriching of this realm.⁴³⁰

Just as Columbus and Las Casas had stressed the commercial naivety of the indigenous population of the New World in order to present it as a location in which trifles or trash could be exchanged for treasure, Hakluyt the Elder describes how items that Smith and others designated as trifles and trash, made by 'the multitude of [England's] poor people', rather than the high-value products of skilled artisans, would find 'ample vent' in the New World, where they could be exchanged for 'many precious commodities'. By listing these English commodities in this way, Hakluyt the Elder's mercantile proposal resonates with the list of worthless spiritual objects, or 'trysetrase', that the English translation of Marcourt (Chapter One) condemned as the tools used by papal 'marchants' to 'meruelously well drawe money to them'. Unlike Columbus, whose *Letter* asserted that taking advantage of a Native American lack of mercantile 'reason' would be 'very wrong', Hakluyt the Elder's text contains no such compunction. Instead, Hakluyt the Elder justifies mercantile exploitation – exporting low-value English goods to exchange for the 'precious commodities' of the New World – for the furtherance and 'wonderful enriching' of England.

These factors also affected the work of the younger Richard Hakluyt; as with his cousin's *Inducements* of 1585, Hakluyt's *Diuers Voyages* of 1582 also asserts the value of transporting 'Deepe cappes...whereof if ample vent may be found, it would

⁴³⁰ Richard Hakluyt the Elder, *Inducements to the liking of the Voyage intended towards Virginia in 40 and 42 degrees of latitude, written 1585, by M. Richard Haklyut the elder some time Student of the Middle Temple*. From the Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1838), p.108. Daniel Carey explains that the elder Hakluyt's text was written in 1585, but remained 'unpublished until 1602' when it appeared in John Brereton's *A Briebe and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia* (1602). [Daniel Carey, 'Hakluyt, Purchas, and Romance of Virginia' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 257-270, p.260.]

turne to an infinite commoditie of the common poore people by knitting.'⁴³¹ Joan-Pau Rubiés asserts that 'Hakluyt's interest in travel writing was not simply out of a sense of geographical and ethnographic curiosity, but as an integral part in the development of a proto-colonial vision that was both national and Protestant (in that order, Hakluyt's clerical career notwithstanding).'⁴³² Personal values had to shift in the shadow of the acquisitive search for profit, which explains Hakluyt's willingness to accept that England may need to act like the duplicitous, 'trifle' trading, 'stranger' merchants that were decried in Smith's *Discourse* or Marcourt's portrayal of papal 'woluish grossers' in order to secure the English commonwealth.

For Hakluyt, the reputation of England was enriched through reporting the gains (even ethically ambiguous ones) made by English explorers in their voyages of discovery. However, for these reports to be made, such voyages had to take place. For this reason, *The Principall Nauigations* was designed to both engender English pride in what had already been achieved and to inspire further endeavours that, if successful, would put gold in the coffers, and enrich the reputation of England at home and abroad.

With this in mind, Hakluyt chose to subtitle Edward Hayes' account of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage to the New World as:

A report of the voyage and success thereof, attempted in the yeere of our Lord, 1583, by Sir Humfrey Gilbert knight, with other Gentlemen assisting him in that action, intended to discover and to plant Christian inhabitants in place conuenient, vpon those large and ample countries extended Northward from the Cape of Florida, lying vnder very temperate Climes, esteemed fertile and rich in Minerals, yet not in the actuall possession of any Christian prince, written by M. Edward Haies Gentleman, and principal actor in the same voyage, who alone continued vnto the end, and by Gods speciall assistance returned home with his retinue safe and entire.⁴³³

The subtitle, which glosses over the fact that Gilbert drowned while attempting to complete the voyage, presents the voyage as an unqualified 'success'. As if to highlight the spiritual value and righteousness of this voyage of discovery, the 'safe' return of the 'retinue' is attributed to 'Gods speciall assistance', which later 'Christian inhabitants' could also expect to enjoy. These potential settlers are also

⁴³¹ Hakluyt, *Diuers Voyages*, I.1^v.

⁴³² Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'From the 'History of Travayle' to the History of Travel Collections: The Rise of an Early Modern Genre' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 25-43, p.25.

⁴³³ Hakluyt, *The Principall Nauigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.143.

being informed of the 'temperate', 'fertile', 'rich' and, as 'yet', unclaimed qualities of 'large and ample countries' in which to 'plant' their settlement – before the people of another 'Christian prince' did so.

The value of this land is further advertised in the 'briefe relation of the New found lande, and the commodities thereof'; Hayes follows Columbus and Las Casas by offering an evaluation of the native inhabitants – the 'sauages', he claims are 'altogether hamelesse.'⁴³⁴ Again, the docile temperament (and correlated mercantile vulnerability) of the indigenous population is included as a necessary commodity, since it promises to lessen the complications that may impede English settlement and trade in the New World. Indeed, even the birds are praised for their vulnerability; the reader is informed of the presence of 'Partridges most plentifully larger then ours, gray and white of colour, and rough footed like doues, which our men after one flight did kill with cudgels, they were so fat and vnable to flie.'⁴³⁵

The value of the materials of the New World to the English commonwealth was a key focus of Hakluyt's literary production.⁴³⁶ Hayes' account responded to these mercantile concerns and suggests that the pelts of the New World's 'Beares, ounces or leopards, some greater & some lesser, wolues, foxes, which to the Northward a litle further are black', should be trafficked to those 'Countries of *Europe*' who 'esteemed' such 'furre...very rich.'⁴³⁷ He also states that 'the mountaines generally make shew of minerall substance: Iron very common, lead, and somewhere copper. I will not auerre of richer mettals: albeit by the circumstances following, more then hope may be conceiued thereof.'⁴³⁸ Through colonising the land, the English merchant adventurers could farm, hunt and mine the land of its valuable commodities, which could then be transported to the marketplaces of Europe, where their sale would enrich the 'Common wealth' of England. While no mention is made of the indigenous populations' appreciation for English mercantile trash or trifles, by promoting the ease of settlement this account still offers a way to allieviate the 'dearth' that Smith described – exporting individuals to the New World would re-balance the 'Common wealth' by allievating unemployment, homelessness, competition for resources and (arguably) criminality in England.

⁴³⁴ Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.153.

⁴³⁵ Ibid..

⁴³⁶ Carey and Jowitt, *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing*, p.8.

⁴³⁷ Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations* (1599-1600), Vol. 3, p.153..

⁴³⁸ Ibid, Vol. 3, pp.153-154.

These vented people would then act as a conduit for the valuable commodities and treasure of the New World to be sent to England. In Hayes' account the treasure of the New World is there to be claimed, rather than exchanged, by English settlers.

However, the benefit of presenting indigenous people with English goods was being described elsewhere in English colonial literature at the time Hakluyt was compiling the *Principall Nauigations*. One such text was Thomas Harriot's *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia of the commodities there found and to be raysed, as well marchantable, as others for victuall, building and other necessarie vses for those that are and shalbe the planters there; and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants*, which was first printed in 1588 and was subsequently included in Hakluyt's *Principall Nauigations* of 1589. The *Report* was written in response to a 1585 voyage to Virginia under the patronage of Sir Walter Raleigh. Harriot and the water-colourist John White had been commissioned to journey, under the command of Richard Grenville and Ralph Lane, to Roanoke Island in order to document the lifestyle of the indigenous population. White, Harriot and their patron Raleigh were united by their desire to establish an English settlement in the New World: they combined skill with wealth and influence in order to see that desire realised. Publicity for the venture was vital in order to counteract the English national anxiety about the plantation of overseas colonies, which was exacerbated by the continuation of England's 400 year long struggle to colonise and subdue Ireland – a task that Sir Thomas Smith had publicly failed to achieve just a decade earlier.⁴³⁹ Despite the lack of success in Ireland, the imperial

⁴³⁹ Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise*, p.93. Indeed, David Armitage asserts that '[e]xternal 'imperialism' was the offspring of 'internal colonialism', as the English developed their ideologies of racial supremacy, political hegemony, cultural superiority and divinely appointed civilising mission in their relations with a 'Celtic fringe', beginning in Ireland in the sixteenth century.' [Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p.6] In November 1571 Smith had obtained a grant of land, on which he planned to plant a colony, in the Ards peninsula of Ireland. A pamphlet advertising the venture was published in the following year, titled *A letter sent by I.B. Gentleman vnto his very frende Mayster R.C. Esquire, wherein is conteined a large discourse of the peopling & inhabiting the Cuntry called the Ardes, and other adiacent in the North of Ireland, and taken in hand by Sir Thomas Smith one of the Queenes Maiesties priuie Counsel, and Thomas Smith Esquire, his Sonne* [(Imprinted at London: By Henry Binneman for Anthohnson [i.e. Anthony Kitson], dwelling in Paules Churc [sic] yard at the signe of the Sunne, 1572), A.i.r. From EEBO]. Mary Dewar explains that, 'despite the confusing attribution to I.B. and its ascription to his son it unmistakably from Sir Thomas's own pen.' [Mary Dewar, *Sir Thomas Smith: A Tudor Intellectual in Office* (London: Athlone, 1964), p.159] In this *Letter* the innocent and friendly natives that Columbus encountered, who 'showed greater love for all others than for themselves', are mirrored in Smith's claim that: '[t]here is no doubt but ther will great numbers of the Husbandmen which they call Churles, come and offer to liue vnder vs, & to ferme our grounds... For the Churle of Ireland is a very simple & toyleseme man, desiring

ambitions of men like Harriot, White, Raleigh and Hakluyt were undiminished – in fact their aspirations had grown.

By 1585, White had produced seventy-five watercolour images, which were then collected and defined as: *The pictures of sondry things collected and counterfeited according to the truth in the voyage made by Sr: Walter Raleigh knight, for the discouery of La Virginea*. The watercolour collection formed a pictorial bulletin informing prospective English travellers and emigrants of the benefits they could expect to enjoy by engaging with the colonial endeavour. Later in the decade, 'between 1586 and 1589', Hakluyt was in communication with the engraver and editor Theodore de Bry – with the pair meeting in London on one of the 'several occasions' that de Bry travelled there.⁴⁴⁰ Through this communication and meeting, Hakluyt interceded to bring about the collaboration that saw the publication, in 1590, of Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* as a volume that contained engravings, made by de Bry, adapted from the watercolours made by White during the 1585 voyage to Roanoke Island.⁴⁴¹ Harriot's text, White's watercolours and the 'highly stylized' de Bry engravings came together in the 1590 publication to form a single volume that Kim Sloan describes as 'the Protestant propaganda for Paradise'.⁴⁴²

Addressing 'The Gentle Reader', Harriot explains that, since Sir Walter Raleigh's voyage of discovery to Virginia, 'some... shamefull speeches' had been 'bruted abroad', which 'slaundered' the enterprise 'iniuriously'.⁴⁴³ Just as Hakluyt had hoped, through the first edition of *Principall Nauigations* (1589), to oppose England's overseas explorations from being 'ignominiously reported or

nothing but that he may not bée eaten out with ceasse, Coyne, nor liuerie' [*A Letter*, D.iii]. Smith's faith was misplaced since, as David Beers Quinn explains: 'in 1573, just a year after the publication of the *Letter*, Smith's hopes for the colonisation of Ireland were dealt a devastating blow, with an event that also disproved his evaluation of the 'simple & toyleseme' nature of the Irish 'Churles', when 'some of these very Irish "churls" employed in [his son's] household turned on him and killed him' ['Beginnings of English Colonial Theory', p. 560; 553].

⁴⁴⁰ Sven Trakulhun, 'Three Tales of the New World: Nation, Religion, and Colonialism in Hakluyt, de Bry, and Hulsius' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 57-66, p.61.

⁴⁴¹ Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise*, p.179.

⁴⁴² Trakulhun, 'Three Tales of the New World', p.61; Kim Sloan and Joyce E. Chaplin, *A New World: England's First View of America* (London: British Museum Press, 2007), p.40

⁴⁴³ Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia of the Commodities and of the Nature and Manners of the Naturall Inhabitants* (Francoforti ad Moenum: Typis Ioannis Wecheli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry anno M D XC. Venales reperiuntur in officina Sigismundi Feirabendii, 1590), p.5. From EEBO.

exceedingly condemned'; Harriot similarly hoped that his *Report* would be able to challenge these negative reports by highlighting the value of New World exploration.⁴⁴⁴ He ends his introduction by explaining how he hoped to enact this rehabilitation through three phases, all of which focus upon the New World's commodified value – the first section deals with 'Merchantable' commodities that would 'greatly profit our owne countrey men'; the second with those commodities that would support potential colonies, since they served 'for victuall, and sustenance of mans life'; and the third would 'make mention generally of such other commodities besides...which specially concerne building, as also some other necessary vses'.⁴⁴⁵ Harriot, like Hayes before him, presents the ease of settling in the New World, where the naturally occurring resources could sustain 'mans life', be used for 'building' settlements and be put to 'other necessary vses'; equally, he describes the 'profit' that could be gained through forging that settlement, in order to trade in the 'Merchantable' commodities of the New World. The appropriate balance between profit and loss, like treasure and trash, preoccupied English writers as they sought out new ways to protect and further the interests of their commonwealth.

Harriot, following the traditional formula found in New World colonial writing, beginning with Columbus, also evaluates the indigenous population. He explains that, despite their 'godlessness':

they passe vs in many thinges, as in Sober feedinge and Dexteritye of witte, in makinge without any instrument of mettall thinges so neate and so fine, as a man would scarsclye beleue thesame, Vnless the Englishemen Had made prooffe Therof by their trauailes into the contrye.⁴⁴⁶

They are virtuous ('Sober'), intelligent (showing 'Dexteritye of witte') and implicitly vulnerable, since, by describing them as being 'without any instrument

⁴⁴⁴ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Nauigations, Voiages and Discoueries of the English Nation Made by Sea or Ouer Land, to the Most Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at Any Time within the Compasse of These 1500. Yeeres: Deuided into Three Seuerall Parts, according to the Positions of the Regions Wherunto They Were Directed. ... Whereunto Is Added the Last Most Renowmed English Nauigation, Round about the Whole Globe of the Earth. By Richard Hakluyt Master of Artes, and Student Sometime of Christ-Church in Oxford* (Imprinted at London: By George Bishop and Ralph Newberie, deputies to Christopher Barker, printer to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie, 1589), *2r-*2v. From EEBO.

⁴⁴⁵ Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p.6.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.38.

of mettall', Harriot indicates that future English voyagers and settlers will find them unarmed.

In addition to this martial vulnerability, Harriot also advertises the mercantile naivety of the indigenous population; the reader is informed that low-value English 'wares, as glasses, kniues, babies, and other trifles' had performed an integral role in Anglo-Native relations from the first instance.⁴⁴⁷ Harriot recounts how, when they:

came unto a Good bigg yland, the Inhabitante thereof as soone as they saw vs began to make a great an horrible crye, as people which meuer before [sic] had seene men apparelled like vs, and camme away makinge out crys like wild beasts or men out of thier wyts.⁴⁴⁸

Harriot states that the forging of relations with these easily terrified natives would have been far more difficult if the English had not had those 'trifles, which wee thought they delighted in', at their disposal to offer the Indians as they 'gentlye called [them] backe'.⁴⁴⁹ Without a common language or sign system between the two groups, the English wares were swiftly put to use to fill the linguistic void; through offering up their low-value 'wares' the English showed the Algonquian tribe their 'Good will and courtesie' and summarily found themselves welcomed by them.⁴⁵⁰

The goods that Harriot names as being given to the indigenous population by his fellow English travellers – the 'glasses, kniues, babies, and other trifles' – are consistent with the 'hats, bonnets, knives, fish hooks, copper kettles, beads, looking glasses, bugles and a thousand kinds of other wrought wares' listed by Hakluyt the Elder in his *Inducements to the liking of the Voyage intended towards Virginia*. When listing the thirty-one 'ends of this voyage' to Virginia, Hakluyt the Elder describes these goods, two of which are reproduced in Harriot's list ('glasses and kniues'), as being made through 'the labor of our poor people at home'. In addition to describing their function as a mercantile tool to bring 'many precious commodities' into England, Hakluyt the Elder also asserts that transporting these items to the New World would provide 'ample vent' of these goods, which would be 'to the great relief of the multitude of our poor people, and to the wonderful

⁴⁴⁷ Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p.39.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

enriching of this realm.'

Harriot's text first appeared as a pamphlet in 1588, just three years after Hakluyt the Elder's *Inducements*; both men evidently shared a conviction about the necessity of privileging the English commonwealth's mercantile concerns above ethical considerations in their New World exploration. In addition to offering a practical guide for would-be colonists, this part of Harriot's account also represents the native's mercantile naivety as valuable to English merchant adventurers. Transporting England's unnecessary 'trifles' played a necessary and useful part in the colonial endeavour, allowing the commonwealth of England to be balanced through this exportation of trash and the importation of colonial treasure.

As well as providing a handbook for would-be colonists, offering them a vision of the natural resources, climate, landscape and people that awaited them should they decide to make the voyage to the New World, these works were also intended to persuade potential supporters of the rewards that could be gained there. Harriot's text and White and de Bry's images offered the reader an impression of a land filled with friendly natives, who would be willing to guide English explorers towards natural resources that were sufficient to not only sustain colonial life, but also be exported, in bulk, for use in England or sale in the expanding global marketplace. They also, albeit more subtly, depicted the ways in which the New World project might assist in balancing the English economy. Although this idea appears at various points, it is perhaps clearest in the image of 'A wife of an Indian *werowance* or chief of Pomeiooc, and her daughter' (Figure 2).

Unlike the majority of colonial reports, which took the form of texts, White's images offered an English viewer a new, and potentially more tangible, way of appreciating the discoveries that had been, and were being made by members of their 'Commonweal'. Michael Gaudio explains that the 'appeal to the visible is hardly unusual; indeed, it is a structural element of early modern ethnographic discourse and of eyewitness travel accounts in general.'⁴⁵¹ The 'visible' was particularly useful in the aftermath of Frobisher's embarrassing failures of 1578,

⁴⁵¹ Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p.ix.

as White's images acted as another layer of evidence of the value of supporting future voyages of discovery.



Figure 2. 'A wife of an Indian werowance or chief of Pomeiooc, and her daughter' from *The pictures of sondry things collected and counterfeited according to the truth in the voyage made by Sr: Walter Raleigh knight, for the discovery of La Virginea* (John White, 1585) © Trustees of the British Museum

Indeed, Harriot's text and White's watercolours showed a far more inviting and valuable location for investment and enterprise than 'the frigid islands and ice-choked waters depicted in the accounts from the Frobisher missions.'⁴⁵² The images enabled the viewer to become 'eyewitnesses' to the New World, which was not too dissimilar from their own, even if they had never left England. Indeed, Karim M. Tiro describes White's watercolours as 'unsurpassed as a visual record of south-eastern tribal life until the advent of photography.'⁴⁵³

The image shows low value English goods – trash and trifles – being put to work in America. 'Beads' and especially glass beads, including 'bugles' became some of the more integral commodities when seeking to trade with the inhabitants of the New World.⁴⁵⁴ The girl is evidence of the native acceptance of English goods. She points to her necklace, which is unlike her mother's – probably made of pearl, shell, copper, bone, or a combination of the same – instead, the child's necklace is presumably made from the English glass beads that captivated the Native Americans.⁴⁵⁵ The child's bead necklace broadcasts the unbalanced trading relationship that England could enjoy with the New World. Kim Sloan explains that beads were valued as status signifiers among the tribes that the English encountered, and were a tool for communication across all aspects of tribal life. Tribe members were intimately aware of the difficulty of making beads out of pearls, shells, copper and bone – materials that were naturally occurring in the local region.⁴⁵⁶ Unsurprisingly, English glass beads, made using materials and techniques that were unfamiliar, received significant interest from and were highly valued by the Native Americans.⁴⁵⁷

While this girl's community imbued beads with ritual and social significance, the English esteemed them to be of little value: a suitable gift for a child. In sharp

⁴⁵² Peter C. Mancall, 'Richard Hakluyt and the Visual World of Early Modern Travel Narratives' ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p.92.

⁴⁵³ Karim M. Tiro, 'White, John (fl. 1577-1593)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), Online Edition, [accessed 22 May 2012]
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29251>>

⁴⁵⁴ The OED Online Edition describes the word 'bugle' as: '[a] tube-shaped glass bead, usually black, used to ornament wearing apparel'; yet, somewhat conversely, Sloan explains that 'Red was a common colour for bugles' and questions if White's watercolour therefore contains 'the earliest representation of glass beads in America, given to an Indian child as a plaything by the English but bearing a deeper symbolic meaning for the Indians?' (Sloan and Chaplin, *A New World*, p.122)

⁴⁵⁵ Sloan and Chaplin, *A New World*, p.122.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

contrast, the English valued pearls greatly, in part for their status as a metaphor for holiness and purity, and used them in lavish ornaments and jewellery. Although the Native Americans also used pearls for ornamentation they did so with less restraint. They showed how they valued them by mixing them with shell, bone and copper to create necklaces and decorate clothing as if they were like any other beads. Thus, part of the story this watercolour presents is that the people of the New World valued these glass beads in much the same way as the English valued pearls: a recognition that an object's value was not intrinsically held, as many in Christendom wished or chose to believe, but instead its worth 'was determined in part by the difficulty of appropriation, which was different on both sides of the Atlantic.'⁴⁵⁸

William Warner explained, in *Albions England*, that: 'Pearles low-prised in *India* are precious in *England*'.⁴⁵⁹ This notion of contested value accepted the existence of different modes of valuing objects but also asserted English Christian superiority. Stephen Greenblatt points to 'the Christians' conviction that they possessed an absolute and exclusive religious truth' as one of the potential 'sources of this sense of superiority'.⁴⁶⁰ Those unable or unwilling to value (and make a record of) goods, particularly pearls (a symbol of purity), in the same way as the English were figured as being bestial and dangerously base. They are as bestial as the eponymous Cock in Aesop's fable of the 'Cock and the Pearl' who asserts that he would rather 'have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls'. They are as dangerously 'base' as Othello understands himself to be following his murder of Desdemona, which leaves him – according to the First Quarto (1622) – '[l]ike the base Indian, [who] threw a pearl away/ Richer than all his tribe' (V.ii.356-357).

The editors who give the Quarto version of this line precedence justify their decision by reiterating the 'sixteenth-century commonplace' regarding 'Indians

⁴⁵⁸ Sloan and Chaplin, *A New World*, p.122.

⁴⁵⁹ William Warner, *Albions England Or Historicall Map of the Same Island: Prosecuted from the Liues, Actes, and Labors of Saturne, Iupiter, Hercules, and AEneas: Originalles of the Brutons, and English-men, and Occasion of the Brutons Their First Aryuall in Albion. Continuing the Same Historie Vnto the Tribute to the Romaines, Entrie of the Saxones, Inuasion by the Danes, and Conquest by the Normaines. With Historicall Intermixtures, Inuention, and Varietie: Proffitably, Briefly, and Pleasantly, Performed in Verse and Prose by William Warner* (Imprinted at London: By George Robinson [and R. Ward] for Thomas Cadman, dwelling at the great north-doore of S. Paules Church at the signe of the Byble, 1586), aiv^r. From EEBO.

⁴⁶⁰ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p.9.

and their ignorance of pearls and/or gold.⁴⁶¹ Rodney Poisson traces this notion to both Simon Grynaeus' Latin translation (1532) and Richard Eden's English translation (1553) of Amerigo Vespucci's *Letters* (1505-6), specifically 'the key passage about the Indians' ignorance of the value of pearls, gold, and other treasures'.⁴⁶² However, the rendering of this line in the First Folio (1623), as '[l]ike the base Judean', has equally telling connotations for early modern assertions about 'strangers'. Naseeb Shaheen asserts that "'The base Judean" is what Shakespeare wrote' and that, in doing so Shakespeare presents Othello's murderous inability to recognise Desdemona's worth as being equivalent to Judas' betrayal of Christ – 'Judas, the only apostle from the tribe of Judah and a man who can aptly be termed "base"'.⁴⁶³

Through this famous textual crux, Othello, Judas and the Native American people are shown to share the same inability to recognise the correct value of things. Thus, while the Native American lack of 'reason', as described by Columbus, or 'wyts', as noted by Harriot, presented European merchant adventurers with the an opportunity for mercantile dominance it also carried an implicit threat. The Native Americans' failure to understand value was both mercantile and spiritual; their desire for mercantile trash and trifles was coupled with their worship of idols. Othello's inability to recognise the value of the earthly 'pearl' he had, in Desdemona's innocence and fidelity, made him murderous. Similarly, Judas' failure to see the spiritual value of Christ, as the way to heaven ('a pearl of great price' [Matthew 13:46]), led to his treachery and damnation. Each embodies the disparities and anxieties associated with value in the newly globalised economic system.

The natives' love of glass beads, in preference to pearls, also links to the immorality described in William Tyndale's translation of *A Compendious Introduccion, Prologe or Preface Vn to the Pistle Off Paul to the Romayns* (1526), which contains the statement: 'Hit is not good to caste pearles before swyne'. To do so is equivalent to giving 'holy thinges...vnto the dogges'⁴⁶⁴. The Native Americans

⁴⁶¹ Rodney Poisson, 'Othello's "Base Indian": A Better Source for the Allusion', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 26 (1975), 462-466, p.463; 462.

⁴⁶² Ibid., p.464.

⁴⁶³ Naseeb Shaheen, 'Like the Base Judean', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 31 (1980), 93-95, p.95.

⁴⁶⁴ William Tyndale, *A Compendious Introduccion, Prologe or Preface Vn to the Pistle Off Paul to the Romayns*, (Worms[?]: P. Schoeffer, 1526), Cv^r. From EEBO

'synne continually with out ceasyng' because of their 'ignorance', which is evident in their deviation from established English understanding of material and spiritual value.⁴⁶⁵ That 'ignorance', or lack of 'reason', would be rectified through conversion to Christianity and the associated move towards civilisation. Perhaps, before those shifts occurred the English could profit from the Native American's 'distorted' valuation with moral and physical impunity since they were dealing with 'heathen' and uncivilised people. However, this 'dream, endlessly reiterated in the literature of exploration, of grossly unequal gift exchange', where 'trash' and 'trifles' could be exchanged for 'treasure', was tempered by an anxiety – most clearly enunciated by Las Casas – about the 'bad faith' dealing that was taking place. Greenblatt explains that 'this bad faith is part of the pleasure of the profitable transaction, but it is a distinctly uneasy pleasure, and the anxiety it aroused may be reflected in the frequency with which the early narratives associate unequal exchange with subsequent disaster.'⁴⁶⁶ These unfair transactions, driven by 'the entrancing prospect of a quick, easy profit' could represent the path by which the English explorers cast the 'pearl' of their own Christian morality before the tempting 'swine' of material gain.⁴⁶⁷

Alongside the glass beads, White's watercolour showcases another English product that was well received by the inhabitants of the New World. The girl holds what appears to be an English doll in her left hand; equally, it might also be a European fashion doll 'through which dressmakers transmitted new clothing styles in miniature'.⁴⁶⁸ If the latter were true, this doll would be a representation of the tools – complained of in Smith's *Discourse* – used by 'stranger' merchants to spread unnecessary foreign wares into England. It would also be the embodiment of the unnecessary trash of England being recycled into a necessary and valuable tool in English overseas endeavour. Neither mother nor daughter look at the doll, while it faces away from them and towards 'the [English] onlooker. The presence of this doll and its outward 'gaze' symbolize the [Native American's] openness for

⁴⁶⁵ Tyndale, *A Compendious Introduccion*, Cvr.

⁴⁶⁶ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p.110.

⁴⁶⁷ Christopher Hodgkins refers to just this anxiety, and asserts that it was felt in early modern England, stating that 'English Protestantism was at its most anti-imperial when it was, like many of the first reformers, at its most Augustinian – that is, when it understood empire not mainly as a vehicle for the ingathering of far-flung souls but rather as a profitless temptation to gain the world at the price of one's soul, and of other souls far and near.' [Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, p.7]

⁴⁶⁸ Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, p.78.

cultural exchange, but also their cultural independence.⁴⁶⁹ It also acts as a crucial 'way in' for an English viewer to an image that is otherwise 'alien'.

White has clearly chosen to highlight his subjects' foreignness. When presenting her new 'toyes' the girl looks up at her mother, who in turn looks out of the image – apparently at something in the distance above and behind White's right shoulder, her head is held high, her stance and footing are firm; unlike the depictions of women in European art, she is 'self-content, proud and vigilant.'⁴⁷⁰ The fact that the wife of a chief is shown engaging in manual labour, carrying a gourd, informs Englishmen that 'class' or 'status' operate differently in the New World. The viewer is being shown that the wife of a chief has no servants to fetch or carry for her; therefore, no matter how elevated an individual may be they are still expected to contribute physically to tribal work.⁴⁷¹ The girl appears to have a tattooed or painted mark on her left cheek, less clear than those present on her mother's face, neck and arms. These marks are further evidence of the foreignness of White's Native American subjects with their tradition of permanent facial markation and scarification. Similarly, the mother's gesture, her right arm resting in her necklaces, is also distinctly non-European. Mother and child are painted with dark skin; they are muscular and almost naked.

According to Walter Mignolo, to be 'without letters' is to be 'without history'.⁴⁷² While the Native Americans were literally devoid of the 'letters' with which to shape their own history, the English lacked the appropriate 'letters' or language to fully document the people and way of life they encountered in the New World, which is shown in their decision to supplement their account of these people pictorially. Mary Campbell explains that 'the pictures were motivated, in part, by the absence of any ethnographic language.'⁴⁷³ White's watercolours therefore function as a sort of primitive ethnographic text. However, just as contemporary ethnography recognises the impossibility of working objectively, these early 'texts' value the people and lands they assess according to English needs. The

⁴⁶⁹ Sloan and Chaplin, *A New World*, p.87.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p.86.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p.122.

⁴⁷² Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p.3.

⁴⁷³ Mary B. Campbell, *Wonder & Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p.51.

watercolours offer as much insight into the desires and values of White's English community as they do of those held by the Native people under investigation.

The English audience is being shown how low-cost playthings that endangered England's balance of trade may be put to good use in the colonisation of the New World.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, Sloan explains that this watercolour reminded the English that the New World was a potential source of income, 'not just from the crops that might be grown or the minerals that might be found but also from the new commercial market the people of Virginia provided.'⁴⁷⁵ The watercolour advertises how the Native American desire for these English goods offered English merchants an opportunity to trade low-cost items for commodities with a high value in Europe. These low-cost items also assisted colonisers and missionaries in making settlement and conversion easier.

White's image evolved in 1590 when, through the intercession of Richard Hakluyt, de Bry was encouraged to publish an edition of Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* incorporating his own engraved versions of White's watercolours, including Plate VIII, 'A cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc' (Figure 3). Beneath de Bry's engraving of the mother and child Harriot's text describes the subjects' physical appearance: their costume, hairstyle, 'pownced' skin and jewellery. Harriot completes this description by reiterating the Native American appreciation for English goods, saying: 'They are greatly Diligted with puppetts, and babes which wear brought oute of England.'⁴⁷⁶ Harriot does not specify that it was only Native American children that experienced this delight, implying that the entire native population were less developed or more 'childlike' than their English counterparts. By emphasising the naive love of this doll, White, de Bry and Harriot show the Native American receptiveness to low-value commodities and unbalanced trading that would be advantageous to the English. In ways that are often overlooked, the images of White and de Bry and the text of Harriot are all concerned, in part at least, with the function of English trash goods in the New World.

⁴⁷⁴ Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage*, p.xii.

⁴⁷⁵ Sloan and Chaplin, *A New World*, p.122.

⁴⁷⁶ Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p.45.



Figure 3. Plate VIII, 'A cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc', engraving by Theodore de Bry after John White from Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (Francoforti ad Moenum: Typis Ioannis Wecheli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry anno M D XC. Venales reperiuntur in officina Sigismundi Feirabendii, 1590) ©The British Library Board (C.38.i.18, plate 8 page 12)

Nevertheless, significant alterations have occurred between the watercolour and the engraving, the most noticeable being de Bry's inclusion of a landscape. Mother and daughter have been transported, by de Bry, to the edge of a body of water. Together de Bry's alterations and Harriot's description offer a constructed, idealised landscape, reminiscent of the English pastoral tradition. Rather than being a 'true report' or an impartial eyewitness 'news' account, the New World is being packaged to appeal to English aesthetic sensibilities and press a colonialist agenda.

Two canoes float on the water in the middle left of de Bry's constructed background, on-board men are fishing or hunting; two more canoes are present close to the horizon on the right of the image. Between these far-away canoes a flock of birds take flight from the surface of the water – possibly evading those hunting them in the canoes. When coupled with the rich, verdant landscape the engraving advertises the abundant food sources that the tribes enjoy, which might also be enjoyed by those inclined to settle in the colonies of the New World. The

New World is depicted as a temperate land of plenty, a refuge from the concerns of drought and failed harvests that were a known threat in England.

The desire to articulate the aptness of the Native American people for colonisation and religious conversion has evidently informed de Bry's alterations to the figures in White's watercolour of the mother and daughter. Their faces have been translated, and thus made more familiar to his prospective audience, to appear 'far more European in appearances than the Asian features White depicted, with higher foreheads, wider eyes, and puckered mouths...[he has] removed the woman's headband, curled her hair, eliminated the markings on her chin, and added markings to her calves.'⁴⁷⁷ De Bry's natives have been made to facially resemble the European readers of the *Report*, encouraging those readers to engage with the project of colonial conversion, since they were being shown individuals who were more recognisably like themselves. Additionally, the mother's stance has changed: her weight now rests more heavily on her front foot, a pose that was characteristic of European art and sculpture. Through this she is familiarised aesthetically for the benefit of the English viewer. Doing so literally destabilises her, placing her off balance and removing the proud strength attributed to her by White. The natural gesture that White represented, where the mother's arm rests in her necklace, has also been distorted: her hand is now tensed, and the placement of her fingers has been exaggerated, giving the appearance that she is pointing at her daughter's doll. De Bry has also manipulated her gaze. She no longer gazes out of the image, instead her head turns away and her sight is now focused on her daughter and the English trifles she holds.

The child has been given an increased prominence and, along with her, the goods she holds. The distance between the child and her mother has grown, as has the height of the child, both of which function to draw the reader's attention towards the girl and away from her mother, as opposed to White's image, where mother and daughter are placed together with the mother somewhat further forward. Her daughter, in contrast to the original watercolour, looks away from her mother and faces out of the image as if looking over the artist's left shoulder. In addition, the decision to give the girl a English rattle to hold aloft, as a replacement for the necklace that she points to in White's image, positions her in a more active

⁴⁷⁷ Roark, *Artists of Colonial America*, p.14.

gesture than the one being performed by her mother. The rattle is larger than the necklace it replaced; similarly its heavily ornamented style also draws the eye of the viewer, since it marks it distinctly as a product of the Old, rather than the New World.

However, the decision to make this substitution should be read in conjunction with the engraving in plate XVII and Harriot's text that accompanies it. Entitled *Their manner of prainge vvith Rattels abowt te fyer*, the text explains how the 'rattle' – 'a rownde pompion or a gourde', filled with stones or kernels and attached to the top of a 'sticke' – was used in native ceremonies of thanksgiving, at times '[w]hen they haue escaped any great danger by sea or lande, or be returned from the warr'.⁴⁷⁸ The juxtaposition of this Old World rattle seen by the English as an appropriate gift for a child to play with and the religious significance attached to a similar, less ornate object by the Algonquin people highlights the immaturity or simplicity of the latter's faith. Again, the naivety of the indigenous population, in this case relating to spiritual rather than mercantile value, is presented as something that the English colonisers could exploit to achieve their ends: the conversion of the indigenous people to Protestantism. Harriot, in his written *Report*, described the indigenous population 'not [as] heretics but gentiles' who 'believe[d] in the Immortality of the Soul'; this was a distinction that positioned them as capable of virtue and easily convertible.⁴⁷⁹

Reading the image of the little girl holding this rattle in conjunction with plate XVII is another example of the ways in which the writers of Europe's literature of exploration and expansion were keen to merge the mercantile with the spiritual. The rattle was both a spiritual object for the Algonquin girl and a mercantile one for the English traveller who gave it to her: however, Harriot's text that accompanies these engravings explains that English 'trifles' may be used to inspire the Native Americans to:

desire our friendships & loue, and haue the greater respect for pleasing and obeying vs. Whereby may bee hoped if meanes of good gouernment bee vsed,

⁴⁷⁸ Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p.55.

⁴⁷⁹ Porter, *The Inconstant Savage*, pp.242-243. This connects to the biblical passage: 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee./ For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee./ And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.' Isaiah 60.1-3, from The King James Version.

that they may in short time be brought to ciuilitie, and the imbracing of true religion.⁴⁸⁰

The rattle is a mercantile 'trifle' that serves two spiritual functions, as a religious object to the Algonquins and a tool for conversion for the English travellers. Yet, that conversion also holds a mercantile purpose since it is designed to encourage the indigenous population to 'haue the greater respect for pleasing and obeying vs', which will enable the English to assume a materially profitable 'gouernment' over the region and its people. In this passage, the mercantile is indivisible from both the political and the spiritual.

However, the engraving of the mother and child also has an erotic value in addition to its spiritual and mercantile concerns. While the mother's animal skin apron in the watercolour falls in stiff folds and covers her from high on her waist to just above the knee, in de Bry's engraving, the material seems lighter and falls in such a way as to display the contours of the mother's thighs to the viewer. The engraving presents a sexualised version of the indigenous population therefore, in addition to offering the viewer an impression of the New World as a valuably fruitful place where mercantile colonies could be formed and thrive, it also functions as a piece of potentially erotic art for the viewer to enjoy – the text itself has a commercial value for the erotic pleasure it could produce.

The participants in the 1585 voyage arrived in a land where 'the raw material for settlement was abundant and available, and the Native Americans well able to manage it.'⁴⁸¹ Harriot and de Bry's *Brief and True Report* promotes Virginia by advertising it as a land filled with friendly (and perhaps sexually available) natives, willing to guide English explorers towards large quantities of natural resources, sufficient to not only sustain colonial life, but also be exported, in bulk, for use in England or sale in the expanding global marketplace. It also, albeit more subtly, depicts the New World's prime position to assist England by allowing 'treasure' and 'trash' to be balanced throughout the 'Commonweal'.

Yet, this black and white engraving was not the final point in the evolution of White's image or the report it makes. Certain copies exist where the plates have

⁴⁸⁰ Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p.25.

⁴⁸¹ Roark, *Artists of Colonial America*, p.7.

been coloured (Figure 4). In this way, the evolution comes full-circle and the image becomes both engraving and watercolour.



Figure 4. Plate VIII, 'A cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc', engraving by Theodore de Bry after John White from Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), coloured later. From a volume held by the library of the Mariners' Museum. © The Mariners' Museum

Colouring the engraved image presents the viewer with a clearer impression of the lush landscape they would encounter in the New World. However, the most startling aspect of this alteration is the marked differentiation between the dark-skinned mother and her white child; perhaps intended to depict the increased ease with which the children of the New World could be converted or 'Anglicised'. The early modern English understanding of the world, influenced by humoral science, inculcated a belief that outside appearance was closely related to inside character; to be light-skinned was preferable since dark skin represented a dark soul or barbarous character.⁴⁸² What is being represented here is the way in which the children of the New World had the capacity to be converted in a way that their parents did not. The child's 'foreignness' is less fixed than her mother's. The

⁴⁸² Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), p.9.

English goods the child holds are shown to form part of this conversion: the goods have the agency to transform the holder. In this narrative, transporting English trash and trifles for trade with the New World both redressed the balance of goods in England and acted as a tool to 'convert', 'civilise' and 'transform' elements of the Native population.

However, Elisabeth Louise Roark has pointed out that,

In the late sixteenth century, the English believed the Native Americans to be of similar racial stock and therefore light-skinned at birth...The Indian's darker skin tone, the English speculated, was artificially produced by exposure to the sun or by dipping infants in a bath of walnut leaves to permanently stain the skin, and therefore could be avoided.⁴⁸³

It is therefore, possible that the decision to present the child as light skinned in this coloured engraving relates to the staining baptism performed by this non-Christian community, which could be avoided through their conversion. The deferral of this ceremony and the whiteness of the child may show the result of a consolidated policy of Christian colonial conversion.

Whatever the rationale, this colour engraving updates the *Report* by implying 'conversion' to be more achievable among the young, which in turn provides justification for exporting goods that were classified as mere 'toyes' within England. The transportation of England's low-value 'toyes' and 'trifles' would remain part of the 'common wealth's' colonial policy into the next century, during the first year of the reign of James I, which marked the first permanent English colony planted in the New World.

When Robert Saltern was preparing to make the first royally supported voyage to Virginia in 1604 (following Hakluyt obtaining Raleigh's permission for the voyage to take place), the 'toyes' and 'trifles' of the 'common wealth' were included as necessary equipment for colonial enterprise. According to an account of the voyage in Samuel Purchas' *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625), the ship, commanded by Martin Pring, was loaded with 'slight Merchandizes thought fit to trade with the people of the Countrey' which included:

Hats of diuers colours, greene, blue and yellow, apparell of coarse Kersie and Canuasse readie made, Stockings and Shooes, Sawes, Pick-axes, Spades and Shouels, Axes, Hatchets, Hookes, Knives, Sizzers, Hammers, Nailles, Chissels,

⁴⁸³ Roark, *Artists of Colonial America*, p.10.

Fish-hookes, Bels, Beades, Bugels, Looking-glasses, Thimbles, Pinnes, Needles, Threed, and such like.⁴⁸⁴

These goods were the kind described by Hakluyt in the *Inducements to the liking of the Voyage intended towards Virginia* of 1585 (the hats, bonnets, knives, fish hooks, copper kettles, beads, looking glasses, bugles and a thousand kinds of other wrought wares), which could be manufactured by the ‘poor people’ of the ‘common wealth’. There is no mention of the ‘pieces of plates, dishes and glass...keys and shoe-straps...bows, bottles, drugs and jars’, the ‘things so small and of no value’, that Columbus had forbidden to be given to the indigenous people his crew encountered. Instead of the broken pieces of European life, Purchas’ text wishes to provide the Native Americans with the trifling fabric (literally the clothing) of English civility – from top (‘Hats’) to toe (‘Stockings and Shooes’) the native body would be clothed with ‘slight Merchandizes’ and civilised. In Purchas’ seventeenth century account, England’s ‘slight’ mercantile trifles are still being presented as a useful tool for managing New World encounters. While earlier accounts, such as d’Anghiera’s *History of Trauyale*, described mercantile ‘trashe’ as a reward for native ‘gentylnes’, for Purchas they are designated as low-value trading objects. Manufacturing and exporting these ‘slight’ trifles would alleviate poverty in England, produce low-value goods that can be exchanged for New World treasure and inspire the indigenous population of the New World to dress in a ‘civilised’ or European manner.

Yet, the list also includes tools for building, mining, farming and fishing (‘Sawes, Pick-axes, Spades and Shouels, Axes, Hatchets, Hookes, Knives, Sizzers, Hammers, Nails, Chissels, Fish-hookes’), and by defining these items as ‘fit to trade’ with the indigenous population Purchas’ text points to an expectation of servitude. Like Columbus’ advertisement of the ‘many slaves for the navy’ to be found in the New World or the ‘Churles’ of Ireland that Sir Thomas Smith expected to ‘come and

⁴⁸⁴ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes In Fiue Bookes. The First, Contayning the Voyages and Peregrinations Made by Ancient Kings, Patriarkes, Apostles, Philosophers, and Others, to and Thorow the Remoter Parts of the Knowne World: Enquiries Also of Languages and Religions, Especially of the Moderne Diuersified Professions of Christianitie. The Second, a Description of All the Circumnauigations of the Globe. The Third, Nauigations and Voyages of English-men, Alongst the Coasts of Africa... The Fourth, English Voyages Beyond the East Indies, to the Ilands of Iapan, China, Cauchinchina, the Philippinae with Others... The Fifth, Nauigations, Voyages, Traffiques, Discoveries, of the English Nation in the Easterne Parts of the World... The First Part* (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Rose, 1625), p.1654. From EEBO.

offer to liue vnder vs, & to ferme our grounds', Purchas promotes the value of trafficking in the tools that would facilitate their subjugation by making them better able to do the work that was valuable to their English colonisers.⁴⁸⁵ They would be dressed like the English and set to work for the enrichment of the English commonwealth.

Under James' rule eight men, including Hakluyt, were granted a patent 'to make habitacion[,] plantacion and to deduce a Colonie of sondrie of our people into that part of America commonly called Virginia and other parts and territories in America either appertaining unto us or which are not actuallie possessed by anie Christian Prince or people.'⁴⁸⁶ As Mancall observes, the exploratory voyages that had been undertaken by Europeans for more than a century, whose records were compiled, edited and published as a result of Hakluyt's dedication 'had finally encouraged an English monarch to take a direct hand in overseas colonization.'⁴⁸⁷ Further to this, Brenner states the 'English traders' who 'for the first time, sought systematically to establish commerce with the Americas' were part of colonial ventures that were under the command of 'some of London's greatest merchants' who were making use of 'privileged companies.'⁴⁸⁸

This chapter has shown how the anxiety over England's mercantile naivety, present in the concerns voiced in Smith's *Discourse*, fed into an ambition to enter overseas markets and the production of English colonial literature. Equally, the presentation of the 'Black Legend' of Catholic Spain in the texts discussed in this chapter, correlate with early modern England's anxieties about the spiritually devaluing influence of papal trifles, which were compounded by the threat of invasion (and Inquisition) from Catholic Spain. The work of men like Hakluyt, Harriot, White and Purchas presented Englishmen with the opportunity to become the knowing 'stranger' merchant, involved in a beneficially unbalanced mercantile

⁴⁸⁵ I. B., *A Letter Sent by I.B. Gentleman*, D.iii^r.

⁴⁸⁶ Letters patent to Sir Thomas Gates and Others (1606) reproduced in Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise*, p.260.

⁴⁸⁷ Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise*, p.265.

⁴⁸⁸ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, p.92. However, Brenner goes on to explain that 'the entrepreneurs behind the American colonial companies of this period achieved neither organizational stability nor financial success. By the end of the 1620s, all of the main companies had collapsed, and the great City merchants had entirely forsaken the American trades. The great spurt of colonial economic development that occurred over the following decades took place on a noncorporate basis, and was carried out by a new group of traders from outside the circle of the City's overseas company merchants.' [p.92]

relationship with the childlike inhabitants of the fertile and mineral rich New World. The people of the New World were shown to desire the trash and trifles of England, and to allow England's merchant adventurers to depart with the valuable materials and commodities of their land: such transactions were 'marvelous' and 'wonderful'. With each voyage of exploration and each published account of discovery the commonwealth was enriched with knowledge at the same time as it was being augmented with New World treasure. England would also benefit from in engaging with the New World because, as Hakluyt claims, doing 'may bringe kinge Phillippe from his highe Throne and make hym equall to the Princes his neighboures', thus lessening the threat he presented to them. The merged mercantile and spiritual lexicon of valuation, which was deployed in response to the spiritual and mercantile anxieties discussed in Chapter One and Two respectively is further combined in the New World literature discussed in this chapter. As shown above, the drive for exploration, settlement and trade was positioned, by the authors discussed in this chapter, as a both defence against the spiritual corruption of Spain's papal trash and a remedy for the English commonwealth's 'dearth' creating overquantity of mercantile trash and trifles.

The New World discoveries similarly altered the way that the English thought about themselves and their commonwealth. The early modern English stage, whose writers sought to create plays that would appeal to as wide a constituency as possible, offers a window on the interests and concerns of that audience. The navigational exploits of English explorers during the 1590's permeate the drama of the period. From what Neil MacGregor describes as the 'circumnavigation' of the kitchen maid by Dromio of Syracuse in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (c.1594), to the promise of Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c.1594-1596) that he will 'put a girdle round about the earth/ In forty minutes'; the successes of English explorers had been woven into the drama.⁴⁸⁹

English playwrights of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were staging the wider world for profit – they sought to create performances that would draw in the largest audiences. The plays, like the published literature of discovery, were mercantile objects in their own right. Claire Jowitt explains that 'the dramas

⁴⁸⁹ MacGregor, *Restless World*, p.9; referring to William Shakespeare, *A Comedy of Errors* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2nd International student edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 3.2.112-137; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.1.175-176.

performed in London's private and public playhouses, and the cheap, printed editions of the plays that appeared in their wake, became one of the most popular and easily accessible sources of information about the wider world for a nation of armchair travellers'.⁴⁹⁰ Therefore, in addition to the promotional value that England's colonial successes had for the encouragement of further overseas endeavours by English merchant adventurers, those successes were also a valuable literary theme that fuelled the domestic market in discovery literature and performances of colonialism. In this way English successes in the New World, which brought literal treasure into the English commonwealth, also provide a literary theme that assisted in the profitable sale of books and play tickets. Like the merchant adventurers, England's writers, publishers and players were profiting from the treasure of the New World.

However, while the English colonial literature of the period was representing the New World as a site where the unnecessary trash of the commonwealth could be securely deposited, anxiety about the matter did not disappear from English consciousness, or from the early modern English stage. Indeed, in 1609 William Crashaw's *Sermon Preached in London Before the Right Honourable Lord Lavvarre* denounced players as spiteful 'enemies to this Planation' of Virginia, since 'they abuse Virginea...they disgrace it' because 'they are so multiplied here [in England], that one cannot liue by another, and they see that wee send of all trades to Virginea, but will send no Players... because wee resolute to suffer no Idle persons in Virginea'.⁴⁹¹ In this damning statement Crashaw claims that even in the New World – the preferred location for English trash and trifles – the players are excluded because their destructively 'Idle' valuelessness would endanger the valuable treasure of the New World. It was in relation to attacks like Crashaw's that England's playwrights were forced to assert and defend the value of their

⁴⁹⁰ Claire Jowitt, 'Hakluyt's Legacy: Armchair Travel in English Renaissance Drama' in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 295-307, p.295.

⁴⁹¹ William Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honorable the Lord Lavvarre, Lord Gouverneur and Captaine Generall of Virginea, and Others of His Maiesties Counsell for That Kingdome, and the Rest of the Aduenturers in That Plantation At the Said Lord Generall His Leaue Taking of England His Natiue Countrey, and Departure for Virginea, Febr. 21. 1609. By W. Crashaw Bachelor of Diuinitie, and Preacher at the Temple. Wherein Both the Lawfulnessse of That Action Is Maintained, and the Necessity Thereof Is Also Demonstrated, Not so Much out of the Grounds of Policie, as of Humanity, Equity, and Christianity. Taken from His Mouth, and Published by Direction* (London: Printed by W. Hall for William Welby, and are to be sold in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Swan, 1610), H4^r. From JISC Historical Texts.

work in response to allegation of destructive valuelessness. In the next chapter I will look at the ways in which the anxieties about trash and trifles were addressed on the early modern English stage, in particular the way in which the concerns they generated became increasingly tied to representations of women. Indeed, in the plays of sixteenth and early seventeenth century England the biggest threat to the health and balance of the English 'common wealth' was seen not as the exploitative 'stranger' merchant, but as the uncontrolled domestic female body.

Chapter Four

Staging Trash and Trifles on the Early Modern English Stage

In the prefatory dedication to *Mr. VWilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (The First Folio, 1623), the compilers of the text, John Heminge and Henry Condell, were keen to apologise for the valuelessness of the text they dedicated 'to the most noble and incomparable' Herbert brothers, William Earl of Pembroke and Philip Earl of Montgomery.⁴⁹² Heminge and Condell engage in special pleading when they assert:

For, when we valew the places your H.H. [Honours] sustaine, we cannot but know their dignity greater, then to descend to the reading of these trifles: and, vvhile we name them trifles, we haue depriu'd our selues of the defence of our Dedication. But since your L.L. [Lordships] haue beene pleas'd to thinke these trifles some-thing, heeretofore; and haue prosecuted both them, and their Authour liuing, vvith so much fauour: we hope, that (they out-liuing him, and he not hauing the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will vse the like indulgence toward them, you haue done vnto their parent.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² William Shakespeare, *Mr. VWilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies Published According to the True Originall Copies.*, ed. by John Heminge and Henry Condell (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount [at the charges of W. Iaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley, 1623), A.2^r.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, A.2^r-A.2^v. John Lyly had been similarly modest in his address '[t]o the Gentlemen Readers' of his 1578 text, *Euphues. The anatomy of vvyt*, when he claimed that he was 'content this winter to haue my doings read for a toye, that in sommer they may be ready for trash.' [John Lyly, *Euphues. The Anatomy of Vvyt Very Pleasant for All Gentlemen to Reade, and Most Necessary to Remember: Wherin Are Contained the Delights That Wyt Followeth in His Youth, by the Pleasauntnesse of Loue, and the Happynesse He Reapeth in Age, by the Perfectnesse of Wisedome. By Iohn Lyly Master of Arte. Oxon.* (Imprinted at London: By T. East for Gabriel Cawood dwelling in Paules church-yarde, 1578), Aiiiii^r. From JISC Historical Texts.]

Two years later, Lyly similarly informed the 'Ladies and Gentlewomen' that his '*Euphues*' should be 'often in your hands, being but a toy, as Lawne on your heads, being but trash, the one will be scarce liked after once reading, and the other is worne out after the first washing.' [John Lyly, *Euphues and His England Containing His Voyage and His Aduentures, Myxed with Sundrie Pretie Discourses of Honest Loue, the Discription of the Countrey, the Court, and the Manners of That Isle. Delightful to Be Read, and Nothing Hurtfull to Be Regarded: Wherein There Is Small Offence by Lightnesse Giuen to the Wise, and Lesse Occasion of Looseness Proffered to the Wanton. By Iohn Lyly, Maister of Arte. Commend It, or Amend It.* (Imprinted at London: By T. East for Gabriell Cawood, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, 1580), ¶.iir. From JISC Historical Texts.] Robert Greene, in addition to devaluing William Shakespeare as an 'upstart crow', was seemingly equally critical of the value of his own work; in 1583, 1584 and 1588 Greene described his own work as 'toyes', 'trifles', 'trash' and 'trinkets'. [Robert Greene, *Greenes, Groats-Vvorth of Witte, Bought with a Million of Repentance Describing the Follie of Youth, the Falshood of Makeshifte Flatterers, the Miserie of the Negligent, and Mischiefes of Deceiuing Courtezans. Written before His Death, and Published at His Dyeing Request*

The apparent humility contained within this dedication, where Shakespeare's plays are designated as 'trifles' on three occasions, is at variance with the request – made of two of King James' favourite Garter Knights, his Lord Chamberlain (William) and Gentleman of the Bed-Chamber (Philip) – for elite 'indulgence' for the volume. Dick Taylor describes this dedication as 'wise and far-sighted', one which 'look[ed] ahead for the future of the company' and the expectation that William would be succeeded in his role of Lord Chamberlain by his brother.⁴⁹⁴ William Herbert 'was the best-known patron of his generation', the figure-head of the Chamberlain's Men (of which William Shakespeare was a member) and known for his generosity.⁴⁹⁵

In addition to seeking financial backing or 'indulgence' for these supposed 'trifles', by addressing this dedication to both the Lord Chamberlain and his presumed successor Heminge and Condell were 'laying the ground work for continuing support in this court office so important to the company.'⁴⁹⁶ Rather than 'trifles', the collection of Shakespeare's plays in the First Folio was a costly marketplace object (both in terms of production and purchase) that was intended

(London: Imprinted by J. Wolfe and J. Danter for William Wright, 1592), F1v; *Mamillia A Mirrour or Looking-Glasse for the Ladies of Englande. Wherein Is Disciphered, Howe Gentlemen Vnder the Perfect Substaunce of Pure Loue, Are Oft Inueigled with the Shadowe of Lewde Lust: And Their Firme Faith, Brought a Sleepe by Fading Fancie: Vntil with Ioynd with Wisedome, Doth Awake It by the Helpe of Reason. By Robert Greene Graduate in Cambridge* (Imprinted at London: By T. Dawson for Thomas Woodcocke, 1583), A3r; *Gvydonius The Carde of Fancie Wherein the Folly of Those Carpet Knights Is Decyphered, Which Guyding Their Course by the Compasse of Cupid, Either Dash Their Ship against Most Daungerous Rocks, or Els Attaine the Hauens with Paine and Perill. Wherein Also Is Described in the Person of Gwydonius, a Cruell Combat Betweene Nature and Necessitie. By Robert Greene Master of Arte, in Cambridge* (At London: Imprinted by T. East for VVilliam Posonby, 1584), Aiiiiv; *The Myrrour of Modestie Wherein Appareth as in a Perfect Glasse Howe the Lorde Deliuere the Innocent from All Imminent Perils, and Plagueth the Bloudthirstie Hypocrites with Deserued Punishments. Shewing That the Graie Heades of Dooting Adulterers Shall Not Go with Peace into the Graue, Neither Shall the Righteous Be Forsaken in the Daie of Trouble. By R.G. Maister of Artes* (Imprinted at London: By Roger Warde, dwelling at the signe of the Talbot neere vnto Holburne Conduit, 1584), Preface; *Perimedes the Blacke-Smith a Golden Methode, How to vse the Minde in Pleasant and Profitable Exercise: Wherein Is Contained Speciall Principles Fit for the Highest to Imitate, and the Meanest to Put in Practise, How Best to Spend the Wearie Winters Nights, or the Longest Summers Euenings, in Honest and Delightfull Recreation: Wherein We May Learne to Auoide Idlenesse and Wanton Scurrilitie, Vvhich Diuers Appoint as the End of Their Pastimes. Heerein Are Interlaced Three Merrie and Necessarie Discourses Fit for Our Time: With Certaine Pleasant Histories and Tragical Tales, Which May Breed Delight to All, and Offence to None* (London: Printed by Iohn VVolve, for Edward White, 1588), H4v. All from JISC Historical Texts.]

⁴⁹⁴ Dick Taylor, 'The Earl of Montgomery and the Dedicatory Epistle of Shakespeare's First Folio', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10 (1959), 121-123, p.121.

⁴⁹⁵ Victor Stater, 'Herbert, William, third earl of Pembroke (1580-1630)', *ODNB Online*, Oxford University Press, 2004, Jan 2008 [accessed 31 July 2013].

⁴⁹⁶ Taylor, 'Montgomery and the Dedicatory Epistle', p.123.

to provide players with financial and political patronage which, in turn, could provide justification for the cultural value of playing for the commonwealth of England.⁴⁹⁷ Playing, like poetry and, indeed, English aspirations for a Protestant imperial identity for the commonwealth, occupied a contested position. Jeffrey Knapp explains that 'for Elizabethans, both poetry and England could be understood as trifling *and* grand', which was useful for poets/ playwrights and politicians alike; 'poets could argue that as professional triflers – indeed, as trifles themselves... they... should themselves be valued as the true defenders, even the prophets of little England's great potential.'⁴⁹⁸ The labours of poets and playwrights were a value protecting and treasure generating cultural entity that benefitted the English commonwealth.

The texts discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis focused on religious and economic values and deployed terms that merged the mercantile with the spiritual. In discussions about the value of the theatre and playing the mercantile and spiritual was merged into language relating to social valuation. This triple layered language is found in anti-theatrical texts, such as Phillip Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), but also in the plays and discourses that sought to defend the social value of plays and playing. The contested social space inhabited by players and playing had become all the more conflict ridden from the 1570s onwards; firstly, Sir James Hawes, while acting as Lord Mayor of London (the position he held from 1574-5) was the principal proponent of the regulations made by the Common Council that threatened to disrupt playing, and the livelihood of players, within the City of London.⁴⁹⁹ The results of this conflict are exhibited the upward

⁴⁹⁷ Jeffrey Knapp draws a connection between the 'contradictory' assertions and endeavours of early modern England's poets and empire builders. Despite the fact that [f]rom classical times poetry...had been relegated to the status of a trifle; and an English poetry had been considered almost a contradiction in terms... many [English] poets came to see themselves as peculiarly equipped to recognize the value of their little nation, to epitomize by seeming to contrast England's spiritual greatness, even to help direct England in its otherworldly course.

Indeed, Knapp asserts that, '[i]n Tudor England, it seems, the cause of a New World empire depended not only on the colonist's trifling beads [present in the descriptions of English activity in the New World mad by Hakluyt, Harriot, White, De Bry and Purchas] but also the poet's trifling books.' [*An Empire Nowhere*, pp.5-6.]

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., p.78.

⁴⁹⁹ Further information on the details, form and implications of these regulations, which came into effect on 6th December 1574, is found in Joseph Quincy Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses: A History of English Theatres from the Beginnings to the Restoration* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), pp.24-26.

trend, beginning in 1570s, in the use of 'trash' and the continuing incline of the use of 'trifle', which are shown in Graph 1 in the Introduction. Performances in taverns of the City were prohibited, while the plays were to be made subject to supervision and censorship.⁵⁰⁰ This legislation, favoured by the Lord Mayor, was symptomatic of a larger, Puritanical and anti-theatrical feeling that motivated legislation of this kind and texts that sought to assert the culturally and socially destructive valuelessness of plays and playing.⁵⁰¹

Alongside this increasing use of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle', Roslyn L. Knutson notes that there was a contemporary, and potentially causal, 'expansion of theatrical commerce' during the later decades of the sixteenth century, which began in 1567 with the building of the first purpose-built playhouse – the Red Lion in Stepney – by John Braine; Julian Bowsher and Pat Miller explain that '[t]he next (formerly described as the first playhouse before documents about the Red Lion were discovered) was The Theatre, built in Shoreditch in 1576 by James Burbage, a joiner-turned-actor and Braine's brother-in-law'.⁵⁰² Despite not being the first to build a permanent playhouse Burbage is considered to be a pioneer in the 'expansion of theatrical commerce' mentioned above, his success came from an understanding of market concerns of early modern Londoners 'with free afternoons and disposable income'.⁵⁰³ By the end of the century The Theatre had been demolished, but The Curtain (1577), The Rose (1587), The Swan (1595), The Globe (built using timbers from the Theatre in 1599) and The Fortune (1600) were still standing; in addition to escaping the control of the Common Council through occupying an ex-mural location, these purpose-built theatrical buildings also positioned playing as a commercially viable industry within a competitive cultural marketplace. Stubbes' concerns, as presented in *The Anatomie*, respond to a shift in

⁵⁰⁰ Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.75.

⁵⁰¹ Attempts, by the Privy Council to assuage, what Adams calls, the 'long-continued hostility of the city authorities' [Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p.26] are described by Andrew Gurr in 'The Authority of the Globe and the Fortune' in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 251-267, pp. 256-258.

⁵⁰² Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Theater Companies and Stages' in *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed by Garrett A. Sullivan, Patrick Gerard Cheney and Andrew Hadfield (Oxford University Press, 2006), 12-22, pp.12-13; Julian Bowsher and Pat Miller, *The Rose and the Globe: Playhouses of Shakespeare's Bankside, Southwark: Excavations 1988-91*, MOLA Monograph; 48 (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2009), p.19.

⁵⁰³ Knutson, 'Theater Companies and Stages', p.13.

the way that theatrical performances could be marketed and presented to their audience through the creation of a competitive marketplace.

With the creation of permanent sites that were dedicated to theatrical performance, the players that 'had once been classified among itinerant peddlers in vagabond legislation' were provided with an opportunity to alter their social reputation and 'they increasingly sought to elevate the status of their profession by crafting a distinct performance idiom and elevating that idiom above those of amateurs'.⁵⁰⁴ As early as 1509, long before the building of the playhouses in London, Sebastian Brant warned of the spiritually devaluing capacity of play reading in *The Shyppe of Fooles*; Brant warns against those who 'wyll not gyue credence vnto the auntyent scryptures be fooles ... [who] dysprays the parables and wordes of the prophetes ... [and] desyre more soner to rede playes / tryfles / and fables'.⁵⁰⁵ 'Playes' are grouped with 'tryfles and fables' in order to mark them out as a distraction from the reading of other 'ryght prouffitable' religious and spiritually enriching texts.⁵⁰⁶

The Puritan City Fathers and anti-theatrical writers continued to attack the stage through legislation and polemical publication, which frequently described playing as destructively valueless, both spiritually and materially – Stubbes describes 'playes and enterludes' as locations 'where is nothing but blasphemie, scurillite and whoredome maintained' and where the 'robbing' of material 'goods' was a common occurrence.⁵⁰⁷ The playwrights, players and theatrical apologists responded in kind as they sought to promote the value of the theatre; this explains, in part, Heminge and Condell's description of the plays in Shakespeare's First Folio as 'trifles'. In this chapter I will explore how dramatic rhetoric in the plays of this period attempted to direct accusations of valuelessness and ascriptions of trash away from the theatre and towards female figures. In this way the accusations of 'whoredome' found in Stubbes' attack on playing was shifted away from the theatre and onto women. The playing companies enjoyed powerful popularity and were also the subject of disempowering suspicions; thus, playwrights and players enjoyed a similarly dichotomous social experience to early modern English

⁵⁰⁴ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.12.

⁵⁰⁵ Brant, *The Shyppe of Fooles*, Di^v.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, L.vi^v; P.iv^r.

women, who could be fully autonomous or totally beholden. As Phyllis Rackin points out that '[i]n Shakespeare's time... England and Scotland were both ruled by female monarchs, and Catherine de' Medici was the regent of France...[However] Shakespeare [also] lived in a time and place when women were excluded from the universities and the learned professions, married women lost the right to their own property unless special provisions were made to preserve it, and wife-beating was regarded as a perfectly acceptable means of resolving domestic disputes.'⁵⁰⁸ The enduring nature of the perceived connection between women and valuelessness in early modern England is evident in John Florio's Italian-English dictionary, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611), which describes the, now obsolete, term 'Trifilo' as 'a kind of ornament that women were wont to weare.'⁵⁰⁹

In addition to sharing a complex and frequently contradictory place within the social structure, 'the rise of the professional stage relied on the labor, wares, ingenuity, and capital of women of all stripes...who furnished costumes, properties, credit, and a hand in the theaters' day-to-day operations'.⁵¹⁰ The male players were reliant on women: not only did the plots of their plays require the shaping of a recognisable system of feminine indicators to enable these male actors to properly stage female characters, but real women also played a part in the theatrical experience of the audiences. '[W]omen were paying customers in early modern theatres', 'female "gatherers" collected entrance fees...[the cries of] female hawkers echoed inside and outside [the theatre's] walls and the wares they sold were consumed in the pit, in the galleries, and on the stage.'⁵¹¹ The work of

⁵⁰⁸ Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.7. Rackin also points out that '[t]he hierarchy of status and rank was just as firmly embedded as the gender hierarchy, and, like the gender hierarchy, it was sanctioned by law and reinforced by customary behaviour...the fact that male superiority was taken for granted does not mean that every woman was subordinate in every way to every man or that many women did not occupy positions of authority and power that would be considered exceptional even today.' [p.27] Therefore, although the playing companies might have attempted to use their dramatic production to suggest otherwise, the masculinity of their craft would not have been enough reason to elevate the status of their work within society.

⁵⁰⁹ John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words; or, Dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues, collected and newly much augmented by J. F. ... Whereunto are added certaine necessarie rules and short observations for the Italian tongue* (London: MBradwood, for EBlount and WBarret, 1611), p.579.

⁵¹⁰ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.1.

⁵¹¹ Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, p.23; 42; Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), 418-40, pp.439-440; Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.2. Korda presents evidence of female labour in the professional male theatre by referring to the recent archaeological excavations of the Rose theatre that located '[a] handful of

women both surrounded and was incorporated into the sites of professional male playing. It is important to note that, although women were excluded from working on the early modern English professional stage, 'there was no legal prohibition against performances by women'.⁵¹² Indeed, in 1612, Mary "Moll" Frith – the real *Roaring Girl* – sang a song, played a lute and sported masculine dress on the stage of the Fortune.⁵¹³ Rackin reads this systematic, but not legally required, exclusion as evidence of playing companies attempting:

to insulate themselves both from the taints of effeminacy and immorality that were associated with theatrical impersonation and from the low status of travelling players. The exclusion of women made the new professional companies look more like the male students who performed Latin plays at Oxford and Cambridge and less like the amateurs who had travelled across the countryside from time immemorial, both of which include women as well as men.⁵¹⁴

Thus the backstage dependence on female labour was problematic for the men of the theatre who hoped to distinguish themselves from accusations of socially devaluing vagabondage that was a hangover from the players' indigent past and assert the cultural value and masculine authority of their labours. In addition to attacking the devaluing effect that playing had on the cultural, social and spiritual commonwealth of England, Puritan polemicists and guild members also attacked the manufacture and consumption of luxury textiles by women for their perceived capacity to damage the spiritual treasure of the English commonwealth by subverting God's design for (wo)mankind (as discussed in Chapter 2). Players, like the tirewomen who costumed them, were definitively excluded from the value-

glass beads', which were left-over remnants from the labour of the female 'spanglers' of the male players costumes. As Korda explains, 'spangling' refers to the practice of 'sewing beads and sequins onto costumes to make them appear more lustrous'; thus, these 'hollow, fragile, and seemingly insignificant glass beads unearthed in the remains of the public theaters serve as an apt metaphor for the scattered traces of women's work that remain in archives and museum collections'. (Ibid., pp.2-3) For more on the role of women in the professional playhouses as shown by the results and finds from the excavations of the Rose see: Bowsher and Miller, *The Rose and the Globe*, pp.131-158.

⁵¹² Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, p.41. For examples of the various settings in which women performed publically (at court, in parish drama, in festive pageantry and in the marketplace) see Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, eds., *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.1

⁵¹³ Natasha Korda, "The Case of Moll Frith: Women's Work and the "All-Male Stage"" in *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, ed. by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 71-88, p.71; 77.

⁵¹⁴ Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, p.43.

affirming legitimacy of industry within a guild: as Korda explains, 'such labors were commonly dismissed, devalued, and delegitimized in their own time.'⁵¹⁵

Indeed, in Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses*, the character Philoponus, when complaining about 'the Abuses of Womens apparell', lists the manifold devaluing embellishments to the female body that were made possible through the labours of, among others, the tirewomen.⁵¹⁶ Through the seemingly obscene choice of costly material (the 'silk...velvet...grogran...taffetie...scarlet...of ten, twentie or fortie shillings a yard'), which ladies had made into 'gownes, petticots, & kirtles' of 'diuers colours...[and] diuers fashions changing with the Moon' and 'bordered with gards, lace, fringe', the unguilded female sempstresses, laundresses, lace makers, hawkers and tirewomen were able to profit through the apparently unremitting female demand for the insubstantial fripperies, trifles or trash of the market in ever-evolving fashions.⁵¹⁷ Philoponus asserts that:

So that when they haue all these goodly robes vppon them, women séeme to be the smallest part of themselues, not naturall women, but artificiall Women, not Women of flesh, & blod, but rather puppits, or mawmets of rags & clowtes compact together. So farre hath this cancker of pride eaten into the body of the common welth, that euery poore Yeoman his Daughter, euery Husband man his daughter, & euery Cottager his Daughter will not spare to flaunt it out, in suche gownes, petticots, & kirtles, as these.⁵¹⁸

Ostentatiously ornamented female bodies were detrimental to the English 'common welth' since this mercantile excess is inextricably linked, as a 'canker of pride', to the destructive consumption and devaluation of England's spiritual treasure. The women who costumed their bodies with the labours of the tirewomen had bought mercantile trifles, which also fuelled their pride; their consumption of trifles turned these women into trash. In concordance with Sir Thomas Smith's notion of 'unnecessary' trifles, Stubbes' 'goodly robes' are

⁵¹⁵ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.3. Korda further explains that, '[t]irewomen specialized not only in the fabrication of such attires but in styling the elite and would-be elite women and boy-actors who wore them.' (Ibid., p.34) In my use of the word tirewomen I have in mind the compounded significance, described by the OED, of '[a] woman who assists at a lady's toilet; a lady's maid (*arch*); also, a woman employed in the making or sale of women's clothing; a dressmaker, costumier (*obs*).'⁵¹⁶ Thus, tirewoman refers to a female that is involved with the materials of fashion in the workshop, marketplace, ladies dressing room and theatrical tiring-house. ('tire-woman, N.', *OED Online* [accessed 6 August 2013].)

⁵¹⁶ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, C.vii^v.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., F.vi^r- F.vi^v.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., F.vi^v.

problematic because the daughters of 'euery poore Yeoman...Husband man & Cottager' are consuming them.

Smith had argued that the 'dearth' in necessary commodities and materials, both foreign and homespun, was the cause of sickness within England. Going further, Stubbes saw the English appetite for foreign trash and fashionable ornamentation 'as the cause of economic as much as moral pathology.'⁵¹⁹ This was especially true in the case of goods that were commonly produced by women, allegedly for the consumption of women and effeminate men, which were also present in the 'Tiring House' costumes of the all-male playing companies of the early modern English stage. For Stubbes, this ever changing, frequently female produced fashion of bodily ornamentation was both a symptom and cause of the spiritually devaluing infection of pride, which he described as 'the principall abuse in England'.⁵²⁰ Ostentatious clothing was a superfluous and potentially destructive drain on the economic commonwealth of England, but Stubbes was especially troubled by the transformative power that he deemed clothing to have. As Jones and Stallybrass explain, Stubbes believed that clothing could 'give a nature to what previously had no nature; they take an existing nature and transnature it, turning the virtuous into the vicious, the strong into the weak, the male into the female, the godly into the satanic.'⁵²¹ Through this anxiety, clothing was given the power to act as the building block of character and identity. It was theatrical, both inside and outside of the theatre: it was costume. The clothing/costume placed upon the body had the capacity to alter both the body and the soul; through discussing these altered English bodies, Stubbes could present the metaphor of the spiritual and economic body politic of England as similarly under threat from the theatricalised costuming of its people. Trash begets trash.

Most telling, however, is the transformative effect that these effeminate, fashionable commodities have upon the women wearing them. They become 'artificiall Women' or 'rather puppets, or mawmets of rags & clowtes compact together.'⁵²² When women's bodies were ostentatiously ornamented with the trash wares that were frequently the product of female industry they became unmade:

⁵¹⁹ Harris, *Sick Economies*, p.37.

⁵²⁰ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, B.vr.

⁵²¹ Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, pp.3-4.

⁵²² Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, F.viv.

both in their presumed artificiality, and as ‘rags & clowtes’. This connects them to trash in yet another way since Stubbes is also describing these ornamented women as the off-cuts or discarded material that is left over from the construction of those ‘robes’. Unnecessary ornamentation and changing fashion have a destructively devaluing effect on the female bodies that consume them: they are infected with, and made into, trash in every sense of the word. These female bodies are further devalued through connecting them with performance and display; by naming them as ‘puppits’ and ‘mawmets’ Stubbes positions these women as stage objects on display, which is integral to their devaluation.⁵²³ The valueless female labour that has been employed to dress these women, which was also vital to the costuming of male players, turns these women into both mute theatrical objects and the discarded fabric that went into the construction of their ‘robes’. In this way these women are shown to be the embodiment of theatrical trash.

In presenting these ornamented women as devalued, Stubbes echoes William Harrison’s complaint in the *Description of Britaine* (published as part of Hollinshed’s *Chronicles* in 1577) that:

In women also it is most to be lamented that they do now far exceed the lightness of our men...I have met with some of these trulls in London so disguised that it hath passed my skill to discern whether they were men or women...it is now come to pass that women are become men and men transformed into monsters⁵²⁴

Like Stubbes, Harrison attributes the devalued ‘lightness’ of the men and women of England to the infectious quality of trash: of the androgynous and foreign fashions (the ‘Spanishe guise...French toyes...high Almaine fashion...Turkish maner...Morisco gownes...[and] Barbarian sléeues’⁵²⁵) that they used to ornament, costume and ‘disguise’ their natural bodies.⁵²⁶ These ‘disguised’ women or ‘trulls’

⁵²³ According to the OED Online, the term ‘mawmets’ refers to ‘[a]n image, a dressed-up figure; a doll, a puppet. Also: a person of grotesque appearance or costume; a scarecrow, a guy’.

⁵²⁴ Harrison, *Description of Brytaine*, p.147.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p.97.

⁵²⁶ Anxiety over disguised or ‘painted’ women was also evident in 1576, the year before the publication of Harrison’s complaint in Hollinshed’s *Chronicles*, when George Whetstone described the ‘suters’ of vain, disguised or made up women, who ‘praise their painted trash’ as ‘carelesse’; these men have been drawn in by valueless, immoral and deceptive feminine devices and, in doing so, they have been corrupted into ‘carelesse[ness]’. [George Whetstone, *The Rocke of Regard Diuided into Foure Parts. The First, the Castle of Delight: Wherin Is Reported, the Wretched End of Wanton and Dissolute Liuing. The Second, the Garden of Vnthriftnesse: Wherein Are Many Swéete Flowers, (or Rather Fancies) of Honest Loue. The Thirde, the Arbour of Vertue: Wherein Slaunder Is Highly Punished, and Vertuous Ladies Nad Gentlewomen, Worthily Commended. The Fourth, the*

were the focus of anxiety because of the deceitful implications that were tied to the idea of being 'disguised'.⁵²⁷

The androgynous costume of these women obscured their true social place (or value) as subordinate to real men in the gender hierarchy, since their elaborate dress was a mark of sinful pride (for Stubbes) and sexual incontinence (for Harrison: 'trull' was another term for a prostitute). However, while moralists condemned this 'disguising' of true gender, legislation against cross-dressing was never included in the sumptuary laws, which attempted to regulate class divisions through attire.⁵²⁸ When London's cross-dressed women were discovered and brought before the Alderman's Court in the latter half of the sixteenth- and start of the seventeenth century, they 'were accused of prostitution.'⁵²⁹ Harrison describes this disordered clothing as having infected the whole community; the monstrosity he attributes to the men may be due to their own taste for this androgynous and foreign dress and/or to the challenge their masculine authority faced because they were unable to control the dress of the female bodies of their community or show restraint in their own clothing.

Ortchard of Repentance: Wherein Are Discoursed, the Miseries That Followe Dicing, the Mischiefes of Quareling, the Fall of Prodigalitie: And the Souden Ouerthrowe of Foure Notable Cousners, with Diuers Other Morall, Natural, & Tragical Discourses: Documents and Admonitions: Being All the Inuention, Collection and Translation of George Whetstons Gent. (Imprinted at London: By H. Middleton for Robert Waley, 1576), p.81. From JISC Historical Texts.]

This anxiety, over feminine modesty (or the apparently growing lack thereof), is still evident in the literature of subsequent decades. The 1588 English translation of Torquato Tasso's *The Housholders Philosophie* asserts that: 'truely as a woman of discretion will in no wise marre her naturall complexion, to recouer it w^t stone or artificiall coulered trash, so ought the husband in no sort to be consenting to such follies.' [Torquato Tasso, *The Housholders Philosophie VWherein Is Perfectly and Profitably Described, the True Oeconomia and Forme of Housekeeping. With a Table Added Thereunto of All the Notable Things Therein Contained. First Written in Italian by That Excellent Orator and Poet Signior Torquato Tasso, and Now Translated by T.K. Whereunto Is Anexed a Dairie Booke for All Good Huswiues* (At London: Printed by Iohn Charlewood for Thomas Hacket, and are to be sold at his shop in Lomberd-streete, vnder the signe of the Popes head, 1588), C3^r. From JISC Historical Texts.]

Similarly, in 1592, Robert Greene warned his ornamented female readers, and/or the men who would court them, that 'rich attire, and such trash, doo rather bring the name of a young Maide in question, then adde to her same any title of honour.' [Robert Greene, *A Disputation, Betweene a Hee Conny-Catcher, and a Shee Conny-Catcher Whether a Theefe or a Whoore, Is Most Hurtfull in Cousonage, to the Common-Wealth. Discovering the Secret Villanies of Alluring Strumpets. With the Conuersion of an English Courtizen, Reformed This Present Yeare, 1592.* R.G. (Imprinted at London: By A. Ieffes for T. Gubbin and are to be solde at the west ende of Paules, 1592), D3^r. From JISC Historical Texts.]

⁵²⁷ The OED definition being: 'Of persons, etc.: Dressed in a strange or assumed garb, or having the appearance otherwise changed, for the sake of concealing identity'. ('disguised, adj. 3". *OED Online*. June 2013 [accessed 3 August 2013])

⁵²⁸ Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, p.29.

⁵²⁹ Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle', p.420.

Despite the fact that both Harrison and Stubbes react against the sartorial misbehaviour they saw around them, the language of their attacks is inescapably connected to theatricality – Stubbes’ ornamented women are ‘artificiall...puppits, or mawmets’, while Harrison presents them changing themselves with ‘disguise’ like a costumed actor playing a part. Earlier in the century, Richard Hyrd’s English translation of Juan Luis Vives *Instructio[n] of a Christen woma[n]* (1529) warned against female indulgence in ‘tryflynge pleasures... songes... fables’ and ‘other wanton & peuysshe playes’ so that they may be taught to ‘abhorre from foule lust’ and display ‘good maners.’⁵³⁰ The ‘tryflynge pleasures’ of play, poem, song or ‘fable’ threatened to derail the education of a woman and corrupt her morality, which was already perceived to be more fragile than a man’s in early modern England.⁵³¹ Elaborate clothing, disordered women and the theatre are thus bound up as a materially and spiritually devaluing, destructive threat to the English commonwealth.

Female inability to recognise appropriate valuation or to defend themselves against the corruption of trash and trifles also jeopardises male recognition of spiritual, mercantile and cultural valuation. In John Bale’s *Actes of Englysh Votaryes* (1546), ‘Bertha the quene of Kent... a frenche woman, caused Kynge Ethelbert to admyt them [Roman Catholic monks and priests] with all their tyrlerye trashe [traditions and idols].’⁵³² As a ‘stranger’ and a woman Bertha poses a double threat to the treasure of the commonwealth; she becomes a conduit for ‘trashe’ to enter

⁵³⁰ Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Frutefull and Pleasant Boke Called the Instructio[n] of a Christen Woma[n]/ Made Fyrst in Laten/ and Dedicated Vnto the Quenes Good Grace/ by the Right Famous Clerke Mayster Lewes Uiues/ ; and Turned out of Laten into Englysshe by Rycharde Hyrd. Whiche Boke Who so Redeth Diligently Shall Haue Knowlege [sic] of Many Thynges/ Wherin He Shal Take Great Pleasure/ and Specially Women Shal Take Great Co[m]modyte and Frute Towarde The[n]crease of Vertue & Good Maners* ([London]: Imprinted at London in Fletestreet/ in the house of Thomas Berthelet nere to the Cundite/ at the sygne of Lucrece, 1529), Eiv-Eiir; Liiir. From EEBO.

⁵³¹ As Mendelson and Crawford point out, ‘[c]ontemporary proverbs, jokes, anecdotes, and tales give the impression that the axiom of female inferiority was as common among ordinary people as it was among the educated élite... The idea that women were less than fully human found its most extreme expression in the assertion that they had no souls.’ Since it was the soul the guided and was preserved by moral action, women were at a disadvantage in early modern England – rigorous supervision and protection from pernicious influences were absolutely vital for the preservation of a woman’s moral and personal value. [Sara Heller Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England: 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.60-62.]

⁵³² John Bale, *The Actes of Englysh Votaryes Comprehendynge Their Vnchast Practyses and Examples by All Ages, from the Worlde Begynnyng to Thys Present Yeare, Collected out of Their Owne Legendes and Chronycles by Iohan Bale* (Printed at Wesel i.e. Antwerp: By S. Mierdman, 1546), Cviii. From JISC Historical Texts.

and infect England's spiritual treasure. Similarly, in Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579), the theatre was described as having the capacity to 'effeminate the mind, as pricks vnto vice' and, as such, it 'was the first cup that poisoned the common wealth.'⁵³³ Like Bertha, the theatre is being presented as dangerously infectious and devaluing because of its effeminate nature. Indeed, Gosson is so sure of the pernicious influence of theatres on the spiritual, economic and intellectual treasure of England that he suggests a total boycott of all sung and spoken fictional narratives in the hope of driving the writers and performers of the same into a fiscally necessary exile:

Let vs but shut vppe our eares to Poets, Pypers and Players, pull our feete back from resort to Theaters, and turne away our eyes from beholding of vanitie, the greatest storme of abuse will be ouerblown, and a fayre path troden to amendment of life. Were not we so foolish to taste euery drugge, and buy euery trifle, Players would shut in their shoppes, and carry their trashe to some other Countrie.⁵³⁴

For Gosson then, the work of 'Poets, Pypers and Players is not only intellectually effeminising and morally vicious but also economically devaluing, since the players have set up their playhouse 'shoppes' where they can offer 'trifle[s]' and 'trash' to 'foolish' consumers.

Harrison, Stubbes and Gosson viewed elaborate clothing and theatrical performances as being valueless in a mercantile sense; however they also understood material clothing and worldly plays to have a capacity to infect and devalue in a spiritual context. One of the symptoms of the theatre's capacity to act as an agent of devaluation was people's disregard of the preservation of their souls, which is shown in their 'flocking and running to Theaters & curtens, daylie and hourelly, night and daye, tyme and tyde to see Playes and Enterludes'.⁵³⁵ Indeed, Stubbes is specific about the theatre's role in damaging the English commonwealth's store of spiritual wealth, when he states that plays were:

vsed (as now commonly they be) to the prophanation of the Lord his sabaoth, to the alluring and inuegling of the People from the blessed word of God

⁵³³ Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse Conteyning a Plesaunt Inuectiue Against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and Such Like Caterpillers of a Comonwelth; Setting Vp the Hagge of Defiance to Their Mischieuous Exercise, Ouerthrowing Their Bulwarkes, by Prophane Writers, Naturall Reason, and Common Experience: a Discourse as Plesaunt for Gentlemen That Fauour Learning, as Profitable for All That Wyll Follow Virtue* (Printed at London: for Thomas VVoodcocke, 1579), B.3^r- B.3^v. From EEBO.

⁵³⁴ Ibid., D.3^r.

⁵³⁵ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, L.viii^r.

preached, to Theaters and vnclean assemblies, to ydlenes, vnthriftynes, whordome, wantōnes, drunkēnes, and what not.⁵³⁶

Stubbes is particularly troubled by the theatre's apparent triumph over religiosity; his text presents a cultural competition for popular attention between the worldly value of the entertainments offered by the theatre and the spiritual necessity of regular church attendance. In this, Stubbes echoes another text by Stephen Gosson from the previous year, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions* (1582), where 'stage Plaies' are described as being unfit for 'a christian common weale' since they were 'the doctrine & inuention of the Deuill'.⁵³⁷ In this text, Gosson is also explicit about the capacity of the theatre to 'infect' even those people 'that came honest to a play', through its 'spectacles [which] effeminate, & soften the hearts of men' and teach them 'vice'.⁵³⁸

Stubbes and Gosson present an English commonwealth where spiritual value is shown to be in competition, and incompatible, with the desire to 'buy' material trash, either the worldly entertainment of the theatre or the pride connected to ornamented, fashionable dressing. The capacity of the professional theatre and elaborate, female produced clothing to infect is also a comment on the extra-mural location of their industries: the Liberties were also a site of brothels, which were known for their capacity to spread destructive and devaluing moral or sexual infection to the wider community.⁵³⁹ Through their exclusion from the guilds, the tirewomen and professional players performed their labours in an infectious space and those labours became similarly infectious – the work of the tirewoman infected the bodies of her clients by turning women into 'trulls' or 'puppets' and men into 'monsters', while the 'stage Plaies' were attributed with the capacity to 'infect' the 'honest' and lead them to 'vice'.

The Puritan anti-theatrical writers, exemplified by Stubbes, thus combined accusations of spiritual and mercantile valuelessness with an opprobrious

⁵³⁶ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, ¶.vi^r.

⁵³⁷ Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions Prouing That They Are Not to Be Suffred in a Christian Common Weale, by the Waye Both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the Play of Playes, Written in Their Defence, and Other Obiections of Players Frenedes, Are Truely Set Downe and Directlye Aunswared* (London: Imprinted for Thomas Gosson dwelling in Pater noster row at the signe of the Sunne, 1582), B.3^v-B.4^r. From EEBO.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, G.4^r.

⁵³⁹ Bryan Reynolds, 'The Devil's House, "or Worse": Transversal Power and Antitheatrical Discourse in Early Modern England', *Theatre Journal*, 49 (1997), 143-167, p.153.

language commonly reserved for transgressive women. They then turned this language on the theatre. However, unlike papal trishtrash or mercantile trifles (the focus of the previous three chapters of this thesis) when the anti-theatricalists attacked playing they were reacting against an entity that had the potential to respond. The playwrights that form the focus for this chapter echoed complaints about unguilted labourers, and they specifically highlighted the infectious, damaging and devaluing presence of uncontrolled women in the early modern marketplace, in order to distance themselves from similar allegations. The stage was used to 'stigmatize the products of [female] labor as insubstantial, insignificant, or deceptive' in order to legitimise the players' own work as masculine, substantial, significant and honest.⁵⁴⁰ As Korda explains, while the marketplace 'cries of female hawkers in particular were constructed as rude, inarticulate ciphers of sound and as such were opposed to the skilled eloquence of the professional, male players', they also functioned as a necessary 'performance idiom' that was useful for achieving the player's 'low-comic and high-tragic ends.'⁵⁴¹ By echoing this part of the Puritan anti-theatrical argument, the men of the theatre were able to assert the guild-like status of their own masculine enterprise and subsequently the social and cultural value of the drama they produced. In addition to distancing themselves from the accusations of devaluing effeminacy, by taking up the same position on women that was presented by the Puritan civic authorities, the plays discussed in this chapter sought to obscure the theatre's dependence on female labour.⁵⁴²

The dedication by Heminge and Condell in the First Folio should, therefore, be read as a response to the contested place occupied by the professional theatre in Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. In this context, the plays were described by these men of the theatre as 'trifles', but as 'necessary' trifles, just as Sir Thomas Smith had asserted that the imported 'trifles' of 'stranger' merchants could hold a 'necessary' value for maintaining the estate of the nobility. Certainly, Heminge and Condell saw the plays of the First Folio as a necessary and valuable means to

⁵⁴⁰ Korda, *Labours Lost*, p.9.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁵⁴² Further evidence of the players' desire to obtain the masculine authority, which was enjoyed by the civic guilds, can be seen in Shakespeare's own apparent attempt to have himself recognised as a 'gentleman' by the College of Arms and, therefore, his community is evidence of a belief in the value and status of both himself and his work.

improve and support their own social standing, and that of the other men of the professional theatre, through garnering the political and financial support of such wealthy and powerful court figures as the Lord Chamberlain and his brother. As this chapter will show, the plays produced by Shakespeare and his contemporaries also presented their social and cultural worth as arbiters of mercantile and spiritual value, particularly in opposition to the apparently damaging and devaluing presence of uncontrolled female labour in the early modern marketplace. The playwrights and the players of the English professional theatres of the late sixteenth century deployed the terms trash and trifles in a concerted attempt to erase the indigent and quasi-vagabond past of their profession. At the same time they sought to assert their trade as being a 'necessary' part of the commonwealth's defence against the destructive and devaluing influence of real trash and trifles.

Finding Theatrical Value: Trashing Women's Trifles on the Early Modern Stage

Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (first performed in 1581, but published in 1584, the year after *The Anatomie*) was discussed earlier in relation to its presentation of the corrupt and devaluing mercantile presence of the 'stranger' merchant and his usurious connections. For this chapter, I want to focus on Wilson's presentation of the disordered English marketplace, in which the uncontrolled mercantile activities of English women, in particular Lady Lucar, are shown to be the cause of moral and mercantile devaluation within the commonwealth. Jean E. Howard, referring to Brenner's assertions about the expansion in 'England's import trade' (also discussed in chapters 2 and 3), comments that 'Brenner does not fully account for... the *effect* of these goods on the social, as well as the political, relations within urban London'.⁵⁴³ She further explains how, in the 'sustained outcry against persons perceived to live above their stations and to be deformed by outlandish foreign fashions, foods, and manners'

⁵⁴³ Jean E. Howard, 'Women, Foreigners, and the Regulation of Urban Space in *Westward Ho*' in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 150-167, p.151.

(trash and trifles), it was '[f]requently... the female consumer, rather than the male traveler or merchant, who through her purchase of foreign fashions bore the brunt of the preachers' and polemicists' displeasure. English by birth, such women were accused of being foreign in their dress, their cosmetics, and their morals.'⁵⁴⁴ In *The Three Ladies* it is 'love of Lucar' that causes the 'stranger' merchant Mercadorus to engage in his corrupt trading practises, while Lucar's own native Englishness is integral for the spread of Mercadorus' corrupt mercantile infection among English gentlewomen and, through them, into the commonwealth.⁵⁴⁵

From the start of the play, Wilson connects his play to the marketplace. Since the play was first performed in the aftermath of the establishment of three professional playhouses – the Red Lion, The Theatre and The Curtain – Wilson was writing at time when there was 'a new type of professional concreteness to playing.'⁵⁴⁶ In these permanent sites the playing companies could ply their wares in competition with each other; Wilson's play was designed to be a valuable commodity in this competitive theatrical marketplace. As Zwierlein and Stock explain, the play 'announced itself as a market commodity' to be put out on display with the hope that it might attract both 'young and old' to buy it, through the prologue lines:

You maruell then what stuffe we haue to furnish out our showe.
Your patience yet we craue a while, till we haue trimd our stall:
Then young and olde come and behold our wares, and buy them all.⁵⁴⁷

The 'stuffe' and 'wares' with which Wilson's 'showe' has been 'furnish[ed] out' are used to stage the mercantile vices of women, who formed a league with 'strangers' as consumers of 'unnecessary' and devaluing trash and trifles. Thus, the play occupies the same moralising position as those Puritan and anti-theatrical writers discussed at the start of this chapter. Understandably, Wilson does not follow these authors in every respect, since he does not acknowledge his own industry to be

⁵⁴⁴ Howard, 'Women, Foreigners, and the Regulation of Urban Space in *Westward Ho*', p.151.

⁵⁴⁵ Indeed, Lloyd Edward Kermode explains, Wilson's drama is 'steeped in a concern for the moral wealth and health of a nation embroiled in a class and gender war, in trade issues and international relations, and in determining national identities.' [Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.30.

⁵⁴⁶ Lloyd Edward Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience in Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 52 (2012), 265-91, p.269.

⁵⁴⁷ Anne-Julia Zwierlein and Angela Stock, 'Our Scene is London...' in *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*, ed by Dieter Mehl, Anne-Julia Zwierlein and Angela Stock (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004), 1-26, p.12; Wilson, *Three Ladies*, Prologue, Lines 14-16.

devaluing and destructive. Instead, he states that the 'wares' he is about to present are 'well wouen, good and fine': the play is a mercantile commodity but it is not a trashed or trifling one.⁵⁴⁸ Wilson's prologue exploits the connection made by anti-theatrical writers, which linked players with peddlers of low-value trash and trifles, by refocusing it to highlight 'the honesty, good conscience, and substantial, well-made wares of both, rather than the dishonest "tricks"' that the anti-theatricalists claimed the players shared with the peddlers.⁵⁴⁹ Indeed, by echoing the morality play genre, Wilson marks his play out as a valuable moralising text, geared at protecting the English commonwealth's spiritual and mercantile treasure by highlighting the innate corruption of women in the marketplace. In Wilson's work, as '[i]n moral writing and popular entertainment' more generally, the faults of women were a recurrent theme, since 'the lure of gold is a lustful temptation to men, and those who openly exercise their desires of excessive consumption and vanity are women', as Lloyd Edward Kermode states, 'Wilson's plays consistently comment on the moral and physical culpability of women'.⁵⁵⁰

Through Lady Lucar, Wilson personifies the effeminising and devaluing threat of the unguilded mercantile activity of women, which Stubbes and Harrison blamed for the spread of corrupting and unnecessary trifles throughout the English commonwealth. Furthermore, Stubbes and his fellow anti-theatricalists also asserted that the professional playing companies similarly threatened the commonwealth through their unguilded, effeminising and devaluing production of theatrical trash and trifles. In short, Wilson seeks to distance the work of playwriting and playing from being designated as effeminate and devaluing trash by the anti-theatricalist polemicists, like Stubbes.

Staging Lucar's valueless and destructive trifles enables Wilson to assert the comparative value of theatrical production; by displaying women's trash the playwrights set themselves apart from it, while also highlighting the capacity for their labour to act as the cultural arbiters of spiritual and mercantile value within the commonwealth. Wilson is attempting to show that the theatre is the discoverer of dangerous trash and trifles rather than a conduit for these devaluing entities to infect the English commonwealth.

⁵⁴⁸ *Three Ladies*, Prologue, Line 17.

⁵⁴⁹ Korda, *Labours Lost*, p.159.

⁵⁵⁰ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.6; 38.

Before departing, Loue informs the audience that ‘men come from Italy, Barbary, Turkey,/ From Iury’ to pursue Lucar, even ‘the Pagan himself/ Indaungers his bodie to gape for her pelfe’ (I.13-15). Wilson’s decision to use the word ‘pelfe’ is significant; the OED indicates that the term is ‘chiefly *depreciative*’, meaning ‘money, riches (esp. viewed as a corrupting influence)’ and, perhaps more significantly, ‘lucre’. As well as the assonance at play between ‘her pelfe’, as written, and ‘her self’, as an audience may have understood it, it is significant that ‘pelfe’ also means ‘lucre’. Through this word play, Lucar becomes synonymous with ‘pelfe’; she is a malign influence, her ‘riches’ are actually ‘*depreciative*’ trash and trifles, which corrupt the men who flock to her. Lucar traverses the marketplace as a corrupt, sexualised but ultimately devaluing commodity, attracting multiple men as, uncontrolled and threatening, she markets her favours – which are shown to be devaluing trash and trifles.

Not only will men leave their countries to pursue her, regardless of physical peril but, perhaps more worryingly for the early modern conception of national identity and loyalty, ‘[t]hey forsake mother, Prince, Countrey, Religion, kiffe and kinne,/ Nay men care not what they forsake, so Lady Lucar they winne’ (I.16-17). Mercadorus similarly affirms Lucar’s corrupting power by stating: ‘Me will a forsake a my Fader, Moder, King, Countrey & more den dat.../ Me care not for all the world, the great Deuill, nay make my God angry for you’ (II.326-329). Stewart asserts: ‘Love of Lucar thus frees the merchant from ties of filial and patriotic duty...this love undoes him’; while undeniably legitimate, ‘love of Lucar’ is also responsible for inverting or corrupting the ascription of values.⁵⁵¹ In addition to inspiring the valuing of ‘trifles’ and ‘vaine toyces’ above ‘good commodities’, Lucar also causes men to value her ‘pelfe/self’ above concepts that should rightfully claim their affection. Lucar not only jeopardises religious and mercantile worth but commonwealths in their entirety through her capacity to destabilise a man’s understanding of the value of his own national loyalty. The distorted valuation and ‘bad choices’ of the men in *The Three Ladies* leads to those ‘men being dragged through corruptible, feminine notions of love and conscience into the city of Lucre’s ruling.’⁵⁵² Already corrupt, these men are further debased through

⁵⁵¹ Stewart, “Come from Turkie”, pp.160-161.

⁵⁵² Kermode, ‘Money, Gender, and Conscience’, p.271.

enabling and adhering to Lucar's unnatural government over London. Through staging the destruction and devaluation suffered by the commonwealth in *The Three Ladies* at the hands of a corrupt woman, Lucar, and her male accomplice, the 'stranger' Mercadorus, Wilson is able to highlight the cultural value of the masculine labour of the English playwright.

Wilson's play further highlights the devaluing illegitimacy of Lucar's matriarchy; her inversion of patriarchal authority (which the male playwright seeks to highlight and rectify) allows her to personally exercise her devaluing power over goods, money and to a large extent morality, completely unchecked by righteous male authority. In turn, she delegates her authority to the control of unsuitable men. 'Dissimulation', the personification of deceit and hypocrisy, is given the 'preferred' role of 'Steward', placing him in control of Lucar's domestic affairs, which damagingly, given his deceitful character, included the allocation of her household's funds (II.250-251). As a further mark of Lucar's unwillingness, or inability, to attribute and recognise appropriate value she makes 'Fraud' her 'rent-gatherer...leater of Leases and...purchaser of Land' in order for him to see the benefit of 'many olde bribes'; 'Userie' (the byword for immoral monetary practise) is made 'Secretary' to make his corrupt 'bargen[s] and exchange [of] money' 'amongst Merchantess'; while the 'slie fellow' 'Symony', who personifies the heretical trade in sacred things, is given control 'ouer such matters as are Ecclesiasticall' (II.252-257).⁵⁵³

In every instance, the appointments made by Lucar show a determination to destructively invert appropriate valuation. Lucar thus exemplifies the threat posed to the English commonwealth through allowing the uncontrolled power of women in the marketplace to go unchecked: her potential to devalue is so extensive that it will eventually affect all wealth. However, as Kermode points out, Lucar's uncontrolled power 'is never absolute' she is 'in thrall to, or "over-awde" by,

⁵⁵³ The depiction of 'Userie' in this play, and the contemporary anxiety regarding the practice in early modern England, were discussed in chapter two of this thesis. However, as Kermode explains: [m]oney produces a lust, and money must satisfy that lust by circulating. Thus money needs facilitation in order to be politically and morally usable and abusable. It is important to note in this regard, then, the interdependence of money as represented by a discrete figure such as Lady Lucre (inactive and ineffective on her own, albeit attractive to men) and Usury; as an *activator* of money, he is the force that makes Lucre *work*. [Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', pp.268-269.]

Lucar's sexual, spiritual and mercantile immoralities both feed, and are fed by, her status as an uncontrolled and available female for Usury to connect himself to.

multiple [unsuitable, devaluing and destructive] male forces as London's economic and moral health declines.'⁵⁵⁴ Wilson is highlighting the incapacity of women to uphold appropriate valuation within the commonwealth; while this woman spreads destructive and effeminate trash and trifles her male creator (the playwright) highlights her dangerous inadequacy. Wilson is again claiming the male civic authority to differentiate trash and trifles from treasure that the Puritan anti-theatrical writers sought to deny him by connecting his labour to the valuelessness of work outside the guilds.

Aided by her coterie, Lucar becomes the figurehead for a community where values have been distorted, if not completely inverted. Lady Lucar's corrupt management and wilful spreading of her mercantile trifles, in which female consumers are shown to be complicit, is shown to have the capacity to infect and devalue otherwise honest, and therefore valuable, members of her commonwealth. Certainly, for the moralists writing at the same time as Wilson and the other playwrights discussed in this chapter, the 'rapacious consumption...of superfluities... impoverished [all] citizens'; this 'consumption was seen [both] as an activity to which women were conspicuously (and dangerously) prone' and as 'a moral problem because the desire for luxury goods was linked with sexual desire... [and] disobedience.'⁵⁵⁵ Lady Conscience, the personification of valuable female virtue in this play, feels compelled to remove herself from Lucar's corrupt economy to 'some solitarie place...And learne to seeke [sell] brome...as a quiet meane to keepe [her] selfe from begging' (II.1000-1004).⁵⁵⁶ Unlike Lady Lucar, Conscience's wares and marketplace presence are proof of her 'honesty, chastity, and, true to her name, a clean conscience.'⁵⁵⁷

Wilson shows Lady Conscience remaining honest in her marketplace dealings by virtuously selling well-made and fairly priced 'new broomes' (II.1074) to 'keep...from begging' (II.1003). Conscience announces that her 'broomes are not

⁵⁵⁴ Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.267.

⁵⁵⁵ Archer, 'Material Londoners', p.183; 185; 186.

⁵⁵⁶ However, as Kermode explains, 'Conscience is usually a male character in early drama, and gendering her female here strongly suggests the determination in the last instance of female influence on the actions and moral status of men.' By feminising Conscience Wilson is able to highlight the insecurity of this virtue in comparison to the stabilising morality of the all-male stage. [Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.272]

⁵⁵⁷ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.159. Additionally, Korda views Wilson's portrayal of Conscience as an active participant in the marketplace as a result of the comparative earliness of the play's creation. [pp.159-160]

steeped, but very well bound...not crooked, but smooth cut and round.' (II.1074-1077), thus Wilson highlights the mercantile value of the honest peddler, who, like the player, was a figure of contempt and the target of accusations of valuelessness by the Puritan civic authorities and anti-theatrical writers. In the case of women in the marketplace, either as consumers or traders, the moralist's assertions of valuelessness were compounded with accusations of prostitution.⁵⁵⁸ Lady Conscience's marketplace cries act as a form of public female performativity, which could be connected to the real mercantile activities of female traders (criers) that had been used by anti-theatrical writers to link the male player's performance to the effeminate and ungilded labour of women in the City's Liberties. By presenting this virtuous female crier Wilson is able to challenge the anti-theatricalists' claims that the theatre and the female labourers shared valuelessness due to their inherent corruption.

While Korda suggests that Wilson's choice to embrace 'the player's likeness to the crier...would later become a source of derision' for anti-theatricalists wishing to assert the valueless quality of such ungilded enterprise as evidence of his naivety, it must be remembered that it is Conscience's public display of herself and her wares that leave her vulnerable to Lucar's attempt to 'spot' her 'with all abomination' (II.1193).⁵⁵⁹ Through this 'dynamic of female-female corruption' Wilson is able to maximise the danger of female inequity, without directly implicating a man, in this play for the all-male stage.⁵⁶⁰ Lucar is permitted to spend 'the play destroying the virtues of Lady Love and Lady Conscience both directly and indirectly: she corrupts Conscience, marries off Love to Dissimulation (who turns her into Lust), and she encourages her vices to bring Londoners to a state of disdain for the virtuous ladies and the values for which they stand.'⁵⁶¹ Therefore, Wilson's play continues to show the danger of devaluation caused by women's activity in the marketplace since, despite her attempts to cling to her 'vertue', Conscience herself is devalued through her marketplace activities. Thus, according

⁵⁵⁸ Archer, 'Material Londoners', p.186. Archer explains that 'shopping became a locus for anxieties about the gender order' because 'the apparent availability of women in the shops and the desire of city women of consumer goods threatened the patriarchal order on which the authority of citizen husbands rested.'

⁵⁵⁹ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.166.

⁵⁶⁰ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.38.

⁵⁶¹ Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.265.

to Wilson, the peddler and the player may be a valuable part of the commonwealth marketplace, as long as they are not female.

Constable Dilligence, the emblem of appropriate male civic authority, first appears at the end of the play, distanced from the corrupting effects of the earlier action, which allows him to act as the instigator of the, albeit partial, return to the 'purity' of the pre-Lucar economy. Although his 'diligence' is, however, questionable considering his early absence and because only the ladies Lucar, Loue and Conscience are brought to trial, his masculine authority (like that which Wilson and his fellow members of the professional male theatre sought to claim for themselves) provides the resolution of the play and the resumption of appropriate and secure valuation within his commonwealth. Through Constable Dilligence, Wilson is able to dramatise the performance of male civic authority; by allowing the men to go unpunished while 'the ladies all go to a hell-like prison' Wilson reinforces the devaluing potential of 'the feminine, passionate, uncontrollable, changeable, corruptible, and lustful... forces of love, conscience, and lucre that reside within and destroy good men of London.'⁵⁶² The theatre, in contrast, can present itself as a viable and necessary cultural reinforcement of the mercantile and spiritual values of the English commonwealth, and not the dangerous and devaluing entity that anti-theatrical writers claimed it to be.

It is Lady Lucar's inappropriate assumption of mercantile authority, her complicity with the dishonest 'stranger' merchant Mercadorus and her mercantile trifles that corrupts and devalues others within her commonwealth. Englishmen, exemplified by a lawyer and an artificer, set aside their formerly honest trading in valuable masculine labour in order to profit from the corrupt employment of Lady Lucar. Similarly, Lucar's unchallenged supremacy within her community, which enables her to export England's valuable and necessary commodities in exchange for foreign, unnecessary and low-value 'trifles', allows her to devalue the virtuous Lady Conscience by spotting her with abomination. The presence of Lady Lucar within *The Three Ladies* enables Wilson to redirect accusations of devaluing effeminacy away from his fellow players to show instead the value of the theatre, through its capacity to highlight the potential threats facing the stability of the commonwealth.

⁵⁶² Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.267.

Although Wilson obscures the contemporary complaints about the devaluing effect of the theatre on the English commonwealth, *The Three Ladies* does respond to other focuses for unrest in the early modern English commonwealth. Through Mercadorus Wilson connects his play to the real anxieties resulting from the competitive presence of 'foreign' crafts that were blamed for damaging the livelihood of English freemen, which was also matched by a similar jealousy and suspicion directed towards women.⁵⁶³ Indeed, Francis Consitt charts the reality of corollary events that stemmed from these anxieties: '[i]n 1551 gildsmen were forbidden to take women as apprentices, upon pain of paying 3s. 4d. a month for each woman employed. The penalty was doubled in 1577.'⁵⁶⁴ Thus, the devaluing quality inherent in female labour, which had been enacted through these legal measures of 1551 and 1577, and which Stubbes figured as the cause of spiritual devaluation, was staged by Wilson as the principal threat to the treasure of the commonwealth.

In addition to the domestic threats to the mercantile and spiritual treasure of the English commonwealth, which Wilson connects to 'strangers' like Mercadorus who act with impunity under the unstable, destructive and devaluing leadership of women, throughout the 1580s (when *The Three Ladies* was first staged) England was also facing an external threat. Philip II of Spain, who had been England's king through his marriage to Mary I, presented a masculine, Catholic threat to Elizabeth's feminine, Protestant rule in England – the Anglo-Spanish war broke out in 1585 and Spain's Armada of 1588 presented the most pronounced invasion threat of Elizabeth's reign. While Wilson's play warned his English audience of the

⁵⁶³ For this jealousy to come from and be expressed by members of playing companies is potentially explicable because of the inability of playing companies to obtain the recognition of guild status for their own dramatic craft, which meant obtaining membership to another group – Ben Jonson, for example, was a member of the Worshipful Company of Tilers and Bricklayers. While players were denied the right to either form their own guild or take on apprentice players, women were not so constrained. Indeed, Stephen Orgel explains that 'until late in the seventeenth century women, in one place or another, were admitted into practically every trade or guild. Women did not, moreover, limit their efforts to ladylike pursuits: in Chester, in 1575, there were five women blacksmith. Elsewhere, women were armourers, bootmakers, printers, pewterers, goldsmiths, farriers, and so forth... and they pursued these trades not as wives, widows, or surrogates, but as fully independent, legally responsible craftspersons. This point needs especially to be stressed, since a common modern way of ignoring the presence of women in the Renaissance workforce is to claim that they were there only as emanations of absent or dead husbands: this is not the case... In Southampton, for example, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, 48 percent – almost half – the apprentices were women.' [Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.73.]

⁵⁶⁴ Frances Consitt, *The London Weavers' Company* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p.135.

dangers of both female control and foreign infiltration within the marketplace, the rule of England's queen was being threatened with foreign invasion.

However, in 1590, 'Wilson revive[d] his ladies in the celebratory, post-Armada play *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*', which features three lords of Spain, the tellingly named Pride, Ambition and Tiranny, with their respective pages Shame, Treachery and Terror, who seek to displace the London lords as husbands for Love, Lucar and Conscience.⁵⁶⁵ In a reworking of the failed Armada, when the London lords 'passe towards the Spainiarden' they feign escape, only to return 'and flourish their rapiers neer them, but touch them not... which the Lords of London perceiuing, take their own and batter theirs' causing the Spanish lords to 'sodenly slippe away and come no more'; Pomp calls them 'brauing cowards' and Pollicie denounces them as '[f]acing, faint-hearted, proud and insolent'.⁵⁶⁶ English bravery wins the day against Spanish cowardice and deceptions; as a result, the London ladies are preserved from the devaluation that would have come with marriage to these corrupt strangers.⁵⁶⁷

With the real threat of invasion being over, Wilson chose to dramatize a similar amelioration being effected within his fictional community.⁵⁶⁸ Constable Diligence's arrival at the end of *The Three Ladies* brought the promise of a return of social order and appropriate valuation through the constable's restorative justice for the devaluing female usurpers of male civic authority. In *The Three Lords and Three Ladies*, Wilson's disruptive female characters are brought under further, eventually permanent control. Having been sentenced by Constable Diligence at the end of *The Three Ladies*, when Love, Lucar and Conscience appear in the sequel they are fully controlled by male authority figures – the 'graue old man', Nemo, and the jailor Sorrowe.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁵ Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.266; Robert Wilson, *The Pleasant and Stately Morall, of the Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London With the Great Ioy and Pompe, Solemnized at Their Mariages: Commically Interlaced with Much Honest Mirth, for Pleasure and Recreation, among Many Morall Obseruations and Other Important Matters of Due Regard.* by R.W. (London: Printed by R. Ihones, at the Rose and Crowne neere Holburne Bridge, 1590), A2^r. From JISC Historical Texts.

⁵⁶⁶ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, G4^v- H1^r.

⁵⁶⁷ Another, more oblique reference to the Anglo-Spanish war, or more specifically the English trade in the munitions materials of 'Bel' or trash metal with Spain's Ottoman enemy, is found in Simplicitie's reference to the 'old yron, old male, old harneis... '& the rest of the old trash wil make them guns too.' [Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, H3^v]

⁵⁶⁸ Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.266.

⁵⁶⁹ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, A2^r.

In the fictional community Wilson stages in 1590 the male civic authority, which was first enforced by Constable Diligence in *The Three Ladies*, is maintained and advanced by Nemo and Sorrowe. In addition to having 'physically suffered from their incarceration', the prison controlled by these men has also altered and remedied the ladies' devalued and immoral state that was shown in the earlier play.⁵⁷⁰ Through Nemo's 'pure vnspotted' masculine authority the ladies are purged of the physical signs of their corrupt valuelessness; Nemo, speaking of his purgative affect on the ladies, asserts: 'I haue them cléer'd and made them all as free / As they were borne: no blemish left to sée.'⁵⁷¹ Nemo's statement points to 'the nonexclusivity of Conscience's spotting'; Lucar's corruption, which led her to 'spot' Conscience with 'abomination', has infected and devalued all the women in *The Three Ladies*. Only the value adding male civic authority that Nemo embodies (and which the professional all-male theatre claimed) is able to 'cléer' them, and through them their community, of their infectious and devaluing feminine corruption.⁵⁷²

In addition to this value restoring physical transformation, the ladies have also been morally strengthened; even Lady Lucar, the ringleader of the depravity in *The Three Ladies*, has undergone a significant behavioural modification as she tells 'Vsurie, Fraud, and Simony Dissimulation', who were attempting to re-establish their destructively devaluing relationship with the ladies, to 'tempt me not, nor trouble me no more, I must not vse you as I did before'.⁵⁷³ Under the control of Nemo and Sorrowe, the devaluing potential of the ladies Lucar, Love and Conscience has been abated but, for this transformation to remain constant, Nemo must ensure the continuation of his authority once the ladies are no longer in his custody. At the start of the play the three lords, Pollicie, Pompe and Pleasure, vie for Lucar's affection and hand in marriage and Nemo must intervene to form appropriate, value protecting, relationships – '[P]omp with his *Lucre*, [P]ollicie with *Loue*: [P]leasure with *Conscience*'.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁰ Kermode, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, p.38.

⁵⁷¹ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, C1^v; C4^r.

⁵⁷² Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', p.280.

⁵⁷³ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, D4^v.

⁵⁷⁴ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, H2^r; Kermode, 'Money, Gender, and Conscience', pp.272-273.

In addition to 'the purging of Lucre, Love and Conscience through Remorse, Care and Charity, and their ultimate redemption through marriage with Pomp, Policy and Pleasure', *The Three Lords* also remedies the judicial inequity of *The Three Ladies*. In Wilson's sequel, Dissimulation and Simony are 'deciphered', 'despised' and forced to leave England, while Usury is 'cried out against by the preachers' of England and is forced to 'alter' his behaviour.⁵⁷⁵ Only 'Fraud eludes arrest' for the second time, 'conveying the impression that he will exist so long as the world endures and can never really be brought to book.'⁵⁷⁶ As mentioned in Chapter Two, Mithal states that Wilson 'took upon himself the task of correcting commonwealths' through his drama.⁵⁷⁷ *The Three Lords* corrected the disorder and devaluation within the fictional commonwealth of *The Three Ladies*; the all-male theatre and playwrights like Wilson, rather than being a source of devaluing cultural trash and trifles, provided a design for protecting the treasure of the real English commonwealth by offering warning of the ways in which trash and trifles could infect and devalue that treasure.

Staging Shifting Values – Women's Trifles and Trash Women

At the close of the sixteenth century, in the decade that saw the increasing use of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' (as shown in Graph 1 in the Introduction), the publication of Nashe's satirical attack on the effeminate vices of the civic marketplace, *Pierce Penilesse*, and the posting of the 'Dutch Church Libel', which asserted the need to act against the effeminising desire for 'lucar' and the wares of the 'stranger' merchant to protect the masculine authority and the spiritual and material treasure of the entire commonwealth, *The Jew of Malta* (c.1589-90) and *The Merchant of Venice* (c.1596) were also staged. In both plays woman is 'cast as an object of property': thus, they could be either necessary (valuable) or unnecessary (valueless) and, through the potential for mercantile or spiritual

⁵⁷⁵ Wilson, *Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, F4^r.

⁵⁷⁶ Wilson, *Three Ladies of London and Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, ed. by Mithal, p.xxiii.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p.lxxxvi.

infection, they might be both devalued and devaluing.⁵⁷⁸ Both of these plays explore examples of females as property through the daughters of Jewish usurers – Barabas’ daughter Abigail and Shylock’s daughter Jessica.

Marlowe’s presentation of Abigail and Shakespeare’s characterisation of Jessica draws an early modern English audience’s attention to the inherent vulnerability of women’s value. It is the plight of Jessica and Abigail to be unfairly devalued and esteemed as trash by their Jewish fathers who, through their status as economically corrupt ‘strangers’ (with their Jewishness linking them to economically destructive and morally devaluing practise of usury) lack appropriate masculine civic authority. Usury was often described in terms that made it akin to sexual perversity, since it was accused of ‘breeding’ inanimate objects – coins. As Korda explains, ‘usury was considered to be the very antithesis of “honest,” manly work in early modern England and was often described in gendered terms as an unnatural reproduction of wealth that circumvented productive labor... by making money breed money.’⁵⁷⁹ Additionally, as a ‘stranger’, Barabas is ineligible for membership of the masculine civic authority of the Maltese community. As discussed earlier, the threat his distorted valuation poses to the commonwealth first manifests itself when he describes traditionally valuable silver and gold as ‘paltry’ and ‘trash’: by highlighting the threat of this ‘stranger’s’ distorted valuation the English male playwright is able signal his own capacity for appropriate valuation, which enables him to protect – rather than threaten – the treasure of his own commonwealth.

Rather than his ‘heapes of gold’ and silver, it is his daughter Abigail that Barabas holds ‘as deare/ As *Agamemnon* did his *Iphigen*’ (I.i.137-138). Yet this presents an ominous suggestion of Barabas’ expectations of his daughter, namely unswerving obedience, even her total sacrifice, as *Agamemnon* did of his daughter.⁵⁸⁰ Ultimately, Barabas will assert that Abigail is unworthy of his high valuation of her when she takes steps to remove herself from the taint of her father’s corruption by converting to Christianity and joining a convent: it is a further mark of Barabas’ distorted valuation that he responds to her virtuous act by literally destroying her.

⁵⁷⁸ Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare’s Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p.143.

⁵⁷⁹ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.10.

⁵⁸⁰ Goldberg, ‘Sacrifice in Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*’, p.233.

Like Lady Conscience before her, Abigail's femininity leaves her vulnerable to being devalued through the corrupted authority of another character. Despite their personal moral value, Lady Conscience and Abigail become the receptacles for the damaging effects of the corrupt value system of Lady Lucar and Barabas respectively. Thus, even without taking part in devaluing dealings with the trifles of the tirewoman or behaving in a way that devalued them as marital commodity, women's value is staged as being inherently unstable.

The final and distorted appraisal of Abigail by Barabas illustrates the potential for female valuation to be both arbitrary and transitory. Barabas moves from equating Abigail's value with that of his 'gold', 'fortune', 'felicity' and 'blisse' (II.i.47-49), and rapturously exclaiming (while hugging his bags of gold): 'O girl, O gold, O beauty, O my bliss!' (II.i.53), to naming her '[f]alse, credulous, inconstant' and refusing to allow her to 'grieve [him] more with her disgrace' (III.iv.27-29). The exclamatory form of Barabas' transitory rapture over Abigail's value, where he connects her to his material wealth of 'gold', is echoed in Shylock's horror over his daughter's flight with Lorenzo:

My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O, my Christian ducats!
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter! (II.viii.15-17)

It is the corrupt value system of these Jewish 'strangers', Barabas and Shylock, which leads them to categorise their daughters' worth in solely material terms. For their fathers, Jessica and Abigail are equivalent to so much 'gold' or 'ducats'; this leaves them vulnerable to being stolen or spoiled into valuelessness for the fathers who will eventually discard them.

Although a father disowning, disinheriting or even using violence against a disobedient or 'disgraced' daughter was not necessarily inappropriate during the early modern period, Abigail's devaluation by her father can be attributed more to his inequity than to hers. Repulsed by her father's orchestration of the fight that brings about the death of Mathias, whom she believed her father would allow her to marry, and his friend Lodowicke, who her father commanded she should feign love for, she elects to convert to Christianity and enter a corrupt convent.⁵⁸¹ Abigail

⁵⁸¹ Abigail's desire to marry the Christian Mathias and her eventual conversion to Christianity made her an appealing, and therefore commercially valuable, character for Marlowe's audience; Shapiro states:

does not lose her value in the sight of her fellow characters, or for that matter, in the mind of the audience. Yet because her father Barabas has the ultimate right to act as the arbiter of her value, the innate corruption that infects his ability to value appropriately leads him to destroy her. His distorted valuation, as a corrupt 'stranger', leads him to incorrectly revalue her as worthless trash.

Although the valuable 'virtue of Barabas' daughter Abigail shines like a good deed in a naughty world', she is devalued through her failure 'to soften her vindictive parent'.⁵⁸² Patriarchy defines the value system; irrespective of whether it is just or tyrannical, leaving the female devoid of real agency in terms of how it values her. While the 'duty' expected from a woman adds to her value, it also exists as a 'due' that she must pay – woman is thus figured both as gift or commodity and debtor.⁵⁸³ Arguably, by displeasing her father Abigail has devalued herself; however, to obey him would have resulted in the ruination of her value in a moral and social context. Certainly, for Claire Hansen, Abigail's actions demonstrate that her 'loyalty is limited' and that she has 'an innate ability to dissemble'; 'Abigail in turn becomes a nun, a thief, a temptress, and a liar'.⁵⁸⁴ Nevertheless, 'Abigail retains a sense of loyalty to her father' since, 'even as she lies dying by his hand', she makes 'repeated attempts to protect and convert' him.⁵⁸⁵ Therefore, in many ways the presentation of the differing and distorted views of Abigail as container of marital, filial and moral values is another example of the contested and complex process of valuation, the focus throughout this thesis.

The relationship between Barabas and Abigail, where esteem depends upon the daughter's adherence to her father, is duplicated, to varying degrees, in the paternal demands made of the two daughters (Jessica and Portia) in Shakespeare's

To early modern Englishmen, the fantasy of Christian men marrying converted Jewesses was far more appealing than the idea of Jewish men, even converted ones, marrying Christian women... the extraordinary interest Elizabethans had in the conversion of the Jews, an interest intensified by religious controversies that produced a crisis of faith, the severity of which, it was hoped, Jewish conversion might somehow alleviate. [Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, pp.132-133]. Abigail is thus a theatrical, female commodity who both fuels the fantasies about a women as marital treasure and assuages the anxieties surrounding spiritual trash and trifles in the early modern English audience of Marlowe's play.

⁵⁸² Arthur Humphreys, "'The Jew of Malta' and 'The Merchant of Venice': Two Readings of Life", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 50 (1987), 279-293, p.281.

⁵⁸³ Lynda E. Boose, "The Father and the Bride in Shakespeare", *PMLA*, 97 (1982), 325-347, p.332.

⁵⁸⁴ Claire Hansen, "'Who taught thee this?' Female Agency and Experiential Learning in Marlowe's Tamburlaine, The Jew of Malta, and Edward the Second", *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 60 (2013), 157-177, p.165.

⁵⁸⁵ Hansen, "'Who taught thee this?'", p.168.

Merchant of Venice. Like Abigail and Barabas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, Shakespeare's staging of Shylock's shifting valuation of Jessica highlights the ways in which improper valuation had the capacity to distort and damage value in the commonwealth by turning treasure into trash. Like Wilson, through *The Three Ladies* and *The Three Lords*, Marlowe and Shakespeare assert the capacity of their dramatic literary labours to act as a stabilising presence for value within the commonwealth by staging these warnings regarding the devaluing presence of abusive mercantile forces, personified in these plays through the figure of the usurious 'stranger' Jew. However these 'strangers', Barabas and Shylock, like Mercadorus before them, are more fully able to exert their damaging effect on the commonwealth through the integral instability of women's, and specifically their daughters' value. The skewed valuation of Abigail and Jessica, at the hands of their Jewish 'stranger' fathers, is the dramatic precursor to the devaluing and ultimately murderous treatment of Desdemona by Othello, her Moorish 'stranger' husband.

The destruction of treasure that occurs within the staged commonwealths of *The Three Ladies*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, through the devaluation of virtuous and valuable women, is accomplished through the corrupt presence of foreign males or 'strangers', whose capacity to differentiate trash and trifles from treasure is impeded by their foreignness. They are a threat to the treasure and economic balance of the commonwealth that they reside in due to their 'stranger' identity, which was understood (as shown by Smith's *Discourse*) to be the route for the transportation of 'unnecessary' and devaluing 'trifles' into the English commonwealth. However, as the plays discussed in this chapter show, it is the women within those staged commonwealths who must act, willingly or otherwise, as the conduit for the trash and trifles of the foreign male's distorted valuation in order for the 'stranger's' destructive devaluation to more fully affect, infect and endanger the commonwealth. In this way the professional stage confronted the anti-theatrical accusations about the devaluing effeminacy of their own labours by highlighting the greater threat of the inherent instability of woman's value; their status as spiritual, economic and marital treasure could, without appropriate masculine control, shift into valueless trash.

Like Abigail, both Jessica and Portia are associated with material objects in their respective fathers' appraisal of them. Jessica is coupled with the 'bags of ducats'

and 'jewels' in the reported exclamations of her father Shylock, following his discovery of her disobedient flight from his house with his treasure.⁵⁸⁶ Unlike Abigail, Jessica shows no compunction about betraying her father's trust, which diminishes her wealth of filial obedience and thus part of her value as a woman. Jessica is twice the thief, as she 'simultaneously steals both herself and her father's fortune, leaving the House of Shylock empty in every sense.'⁵⁸⁷ However, in disobediendly stealing herself she also devalues the property that she takes – herself. Shylock has been deprived, not only of the volition to dispose of his property, but also of the 'duty' that is 'due' to him from his heiress. In Shylock's mind Jessica effects multiple devaluing alterations; her disobedience devalues her, her theft makes her father poorer and, through this, she also shows herself to be a recalcitrant debtor who is unwilling to see the value of paying her 'dues' to her father.

Unlike Barabas, Shylock had attempted to preserve his daughter's value by preventing her venturing into society unsupervised. When Shylock commands Jessica to '[s]hut doors after you./ Fast bind, fast find' (II.v.51-52), he shows his inclination to lock her away with the rest of his treasure, revealing both the symbolic value he ascribes to her and his appraisal of her as a possession. For Portia, the play's other locked-away daughter, her value preserving confinement is at once symbolic and more obvious. While, in the 'casket game', it is her 'counterfeit' that has been locked away, her obvious legal 'duty' to obey the outcome of the 'game' defined in her dead father's will is the confinement that she feels to be 'hard' (I.ii.22). Despite her displeasure that 'the will of a living daughter [is] curbed by the will of a dead father' (I.ii.21-22) she complies and, through the will's very existence, the perpetuity and immortality of a 'father's desire to maintain both legal and physical possession' over his daughter is fulfilled.⁵⁸⁸

In addition to ensuring his enduring possession of her, Portia's father's will also demands, through the rules of the casket game, that her future husband perpetuates his appraisal of his daughter's value. The suitor must be able to value her in the same terms her father did, as Boose explains, 'the successful suitor will

⁵⁸⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice, or Otherwise Called the Jew of Venice*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), II.viii.15-22.

⁵⁸⁷ Boose, 'The Father and the Bride', p.336.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.335-336.

be the one who values Portia enough to choose not the gold or silver she brings with her as a dowry but the lead casket that requires him to “give and hazard all”...she is herself a dowry.’⁵⁸⁹ While Barabas deviates from his assertion about how ‘deare’ he holds his daughter in opposition to his gold and silver, which he describes as ‘paltry...trash’, the final act and legacy of Portia’s father is to ensure that his daughter’s future husband (and possessor) will value her for her non-material virtues and above the material, worldly treasure of gold and silver. As her waiting woman Nerissa explains, ‘the lottery’ that her ‘ever virtuous’ father ‘devised’ was intended to ensure that she ‘will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love’ (I.ii.24-29). Barabas’ corrupted values led him to eventually view his daughter as valueless and worthy of destruction: conversely the will of Portia’s father seeks to ensure that she will not be similarly devalued by a husband, potentially a value endangering ‘stranger’, that may – like other foreign men – be unable to differentiate trash and trifles from treasure. Such a husband would be an unfit conservator of Portia’s economic, spiritual and marital treasure, which are potentially jeopardised by her porous femininity. Portia’s father, like Nemo in *The Three Lords*, strives to secure a treasure protecting and value adding marriage for the locked away female he controls.

The casket game protects Portia’s value from a marriage to the Moorish ‘stranger’, the Prince of Morocco, and the vain (and therefore spiritually lacking) Prince of Aragon. Morocco’s misreading of Portia’s value leads him to wrongly view the leaden casket containing her image as ‘dross’ (II.vii.20) or trash and mistakenly select the golden casket; similarly, Aragon’s spiritually improper self-love leads him to select the silver casket, since he assumes that Portia is ‘as much as he deserves’ (II.ix.35), instead he receives a ‘portrait of a blinking idiot’ (II.ix.53) – a mocking rebuke for his inability to display the appropriate Christian understanding of valuation. The failure of the Prince of Morocco to understand correct valuation within the casket game allows Portia to avoid a potentially devaluing and destructive marriage to a ‘stranger’. Unlike Desdemona, who, is devalued and eventually destroyed by ‘[t]ying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes/ In an extravagant and wheeling stranger’ (I.i.136-137), Portia’s father’s highly structured stage management of her betrothal protects her from a similar fate.

⁵⁸⁹ Boose, ‘The Father and the Bride’, p.337.

The casket game, as mandated by Portia's father's will, enables the continuation of his authoritative masculine control over the value of his treasure (his daughter); through this Portia's father replicates the playwright's awareness of the vulnerability of the valuation of women and the ease with which their status as marital treasure may be reduced to devalued trash and trifles. Like the playwright, Portia's father is able to exert his masculine control over valuation within his community despite the fact that he is not present within it; through writing the terms of, or rather stage-managing, the casket game Portia's father protects his daughter's value from alteration and, by maintaining the stability of her feminine treasure he also ensures the balance of his commonwealth. Since the value of a woman could so easily be made into trash, through her own action or the misjudgement of the 'stranger' men around her, she represents a consistent threat to her commonwealth that only the appropriate masculine control (of father, playwright, civic official) can counteract.

The fact that both of the daughters within *The Merchant of Venice* have been locked away – physically in the case of Jessica and symbolically for Portia – presents both women with 'the test by which the daughter defines herself' and either confirms or negates their father's perceived valuation of them.⁵⁹⁰ While they both bring dowries, Portia honours her father's will and thus herself, but Jessica must be 'transformed to a boy' stealing herself and her dowry away in 'shame' (II.vi.39-41). However, while her father's will acts as a lasting reminder of Portia's value as a marital commodity to her future husband and herself, with his death the unchallenged retention of her non-material value and material wealth falls into her hands. Portia is left in control of the casket game, with the capacity to guide the suitors as much or as little as she chooses; with her favour falling on Bassanio, Portia elects to change the game by having members of her train sing a song that will lead him to the casket containing her image (III.ii.63-72). Thus, Portia takes over some control of how her own marital value is understood and received.

Following the confirmation of Bassanio as her future husband, Portia spends the rest of the play ensuring the continuation of her value in the marital marketplace, by maintaining both her virtue and her personal material wealth. Like her father

⁵⁹⁰ Boose, 'The Father and the Bride', p.336.

before, Portia displays her determination to place herself and her wealth into the male hands of her choice. To do so, she must subvert the traditional role of the submissive and obedient woman; just as her suitors are required to 'give and hazard all' they have to get what they 'desire' (II.ix.20-23), Portia must similarly 'hazard' her chief treasure – her feminine virtue and her material wealth – in order to prevent them from being devalued as trash and trifles through improper masculine control. When Portia proclaims that she and Nerissa will follow Bassanio and Graziano, 'accoutered like young men' (III.v.63), she 'hazard[s]' the valuable virtue of her feminine modesty since, by costuming her body to hide her true gender, she leaves her chastity open to question. As mentioned earlier, Harrison's *Description* had described such women as 'trulls' (prostitutes). Further to this, the disguised Portia also jeopardises her claim to the feminine virtues of humility and meekness, when she assumes greater male agency (in addition to male dress) by arguing with men, in court, while posing as a lawyer. Through this presumption Portia could, all too easily, find herself in the position of the women of *The Three Ladies*, in particular Lady Lucar, who having usurped the traditional male role of control over social, spiritual, legal and mercantile matters becomes a valueless, corrupted and corrupting force within the commonwealth. Lucar is eventually denounced and removed from society when Constable Diligence returns to reclaim the position of authority that Lucar had immorally assumed.

Portia is, however, an anomaly – her wit and knowledge of proper value allows her to 'hazard' and win. She maintains her virtue and her wealth through her skilful management of spiritual, mercantile and cultural conceptions of value. She maintains the valuable rule of law, while using her wit to influence how it is enacted. Similarly, she privileges the value of the bond of marriage: it is clear that she knows both what she owes Bassanio and what he owes to her, and through Bassanio's failure to keep his oath and his ring, Portia is able to assert herself as a 'bond-wielding, scorekeeping, female creditor' who will joke about being unfaithful (V.i.258) to teach her husband to remember her value and the value of the bonds he made to her.⁵⁹¹ Portia is saved from the devaluation that might be expected for a woman who cross-dresses, deceives her husband, poses as a lawyer to take control in the male sphere of the courtroom and hints at having committed

⁵⁹¹ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.83.

adultery, because each of these challenging behaviours are designed to strengthen her own grasp on the way in which her value was assessed and maintained. Similarly, her near obsessive reiteration of the value of the ring could leave her vulnerable to morally devaluing accusations of avarice, however, because of her skilful management of valuation, that reiteration becomes evidence of her temperance and control instead. Indeed, '[f]rom the perspective of contemporary treatises on accounting... Portia's exactitude would have been viewed not as a contradiction but as a confirmation of her Christian virtue.'⁵⁹²

However, Portia's control over her own status as valuable marital treasure and her successful intervention to ensure the continuation of economic and judicial balance within her commonwealth is ultimately achieved through the use of inherently theatrical techniques. Portia, played by a cross-dressed boy actor, must become a cross-dressed player herself. Her capacity to defend the stability of her personal, marital and economic treasure rests therefore upon the tradition of professional male playing. By adopting a male persona and costume the threat of the shifting valuation that accompanied Portia's femininity could be avoided; as if to discredit the accusations of effeminate devaluation that the anti-theatricalists aimed at the English professional stage, Portia's adoption of these elements of the player's craft are shown to be the vital element for her virtuous control over valuation; of both her personal treasure and the spiritual or moral wealth of her community. Rather than being a dangerously devaluing and effeminate entity within the commonwealth, in *The Merchant of Venice* the techniques of the professional stage, and theatricality in general, shield Portia from being devalued and discounted as effeminate trash and enable her to subvert the mercantile corruption of the 'stranger' Shylock. Playing is used to restore the balance of justice and economics within this staged commonwealth.

Portia's expert management of her marital and economic value, in combination with the comedic plot that she inhabits, allows her to successfully take up the role of a player and 'hazard' her worth without diminishing it. Portia's value remains stable, her actions and the opinions of the men around her are shown to have no impact upon it. Thus, in many ways, Shakespeare's staging of Portia's unassailable virtue and secure valuation is the mirror opposite of his tragic presentation of

⁵⁹² Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.80.

Desdemona's story in *Othello* (c.1603-4). Although Desdemona's devaluation is the most profound, destructive and unwarranted to occur within the play, she is not the only character to experience the phenomena. *Othello* stages a community in which virtue is shown to be assailable and all personal value insecure. Indeed, Iago's assessment that '[r]eputation is an idle and most false imposition, oft got without merit and lost without deserving' (II.iii.251-252) acts as the leitmotif for the play. Through being deemed 'virtuous' (as Othello falsely assumes Iago to be), an individual's credit value is high and rising; by being imagined 'vicious' (as Iago deceptively presents Desdemona as being), their value is 'trashed' and dangerously and destructively lowered. The necessary masculine civic control over valuation, with the connected capacity to differentiate treasure from trash and trifles is lacking in the communities of *Othello*.

The removal of masculine civic control over this fictional community begins with the military deployment to Cyprus. This move displaced the army and their train from the strong structure of Venetian society and the Duke's authoritative and stabilising influence over the valuation of people and objects. Additionally, it was Othello, a Moorish 'stranger' to the customs, valuation and commonwealth of Venice, who commanded the army and acted as the de facto leader of the displaced community. Removal from the proximity of the masculine civic authority of Venice and headship by a 'stranger' allows devaluing usurpation of the role of arbiter of value by Iago. It is Cyprus' distance from the controlled value system of the Venetian commonwealth and Othello's inability to recognise and manage valuation that enables Iago to set about manipulating and ultimately corrupting the play's value system. Iago's destructive skill rests upon his knowledge of his own 'price', his awareness of others' perceptions of value and the ability to manipulate that perception without damaging appraisals of him. Thus, his efficacy in controlling valuation is rooted in the same self-awareness that enabled Portia to manage and protect her own high value while engaging in her morally inspired but 'hazard[ous]' behaviour; in Iago's case, since he seeks to invert and corrupt, rather than maintain value, the eventual outcome is the devaluation or destruction of his entire community. To serve his corrupt purposes, Iago manipulates Othello's inability, as a 'stranger', to either recognise or maintain appropriate valuation by exploiting the inherent instability of Desdemona's feminine value and the ease

with which her marital, material and spiritual treasure can be reinterpreted and presented as shameful trash to be purged for the good of the commonwealth.

Even before departing for Cyprus Iago attempts to reduce Desdemona's value by questioning her chastity; he describes her as 'a super-subtle Venetian' (I.iii.347) who, '[w]hen she is sated with [Othello's] body...[will] find the error of her choice.' (I.iii.342-343). By describing her decision to marry Othello as an 'error' Iago also questions the value of the couple's marital vows; if they were made in 'error' they lack the sufficient value to be recognised. If her marriage is no more than 'a frail vow' made 'betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian' (I.iii.346-347), then Desdemona is engaged in an erroneous sexual relationship – the alleged invalidity of her marriage turns her into marital trash, which may be easily discarded. Additionally, Desdemona is presented as guilty of vacillating 'lust'; Iago asserts that her relationship with Othello had a 'violent commencement' and thus, will have an 'answerable sequestration' (I.iii.329-338). Iago's success in this, and his subsequent attacks on the public perception of Desdemona's value is made possible by her exclusion from these male discussions.

Unlike Portia, who 'hazard[s]' her virtue by cross-dressing like a player and injecting herself into the male arena of the courtroom in order to ensure the conservation of the value of her marital bonds and material wealth, Desdemona's honesty is questioned and devalued when Iago asserts that she, and all women, were deceitful '[p]layers in [their] housewifery' (II.i.115). While Portia actively embraced the masculinity that playing offered her in order to secure her personal treasure, and that of her commonwealth, from the trashing influence of corrupt and corrupting male 'strangers', Desdemona does no such thing. Instead, from this moment onwards, Iago's play-acting consistently fools Desdemona: his deceitful playing goads her into providing Iago with the ammunition to falsely represent her as the valueless marital trash that Othello must destroy. Even when presented with this direct assault on her honesty she is unable to provide any counter argument. Instead Desdemona misreads his sentiments as jovial and in the midst of her laughter even offers some validation for his claim of a feminine capacity for duplicity, saying: 'I am not merry, but I do beguile/ The thing I am by seeming otherwise' (II.i.125-126). Despite this early admission of her capacity to manage her public image with 'beguil[ing]' or deceit, Desdemona evidently lacks either the

ability or desire to deploy that guile to defend her value from Iago's corrupting influence. The positive theatricality that saved Portia is misappropriated by Iago to spread his deceitful trash throughout his community, a process which eventually destroys both Desdemona and Othello.

While Portia's cross-dressed liberty enabled her to test and thereby strengthen the value of the bond that Bassanio made to her Desdemona's observance of the value of feminine propriety prevents her from pursuing a similar endeavour. Indeed, Desdemona's feminine attire – marking her out as a 'super-subtle Venetian' – would have led members of the early modern English audience of *Othello* to question her chastity, and therefore her value as a marital commodity. Neil MacGregor explains that, in the seventeenth century mind, there was an 'ambiguity about Venetian women – even women as irreproachably pure as Desdemona – that suggested all kinds of possibilities and pleasurable deceits.'⁵⁹³ The Venetian courtesan was known to be skilled in 'emulating respectable women in their dress and manner to attract and deceive potential customers', therefore, by dressing in the style befitting an elite and virtuous lady of Venice, Desdemona was also dressed in the costume of a morally corrupt and maritally valueless courtesan.⁵⁹⁴

Once again, the destructively devaluing labours and merchandise of the tirewoman and the 'stranger' merchant can be seen as complicit in the trashing of a virtuous woman. Just as Lady Lucar, while supporting the 'stranger' Mercadorus' trade in unnecessary 'trifles', was able to 'spot' the blameless Lady Conscience 'with all abomination', Desdemona's Venetian attire contributes to Iago's defaming allegations against her. Her fashionable clothing magnifies the inherent feminine frailty of her valuation – the effeminate, unguilded merchandise of the tirewomen and the 'stranger' merchant, which she places upon her female body, compounds its vulnerability. Desdemona's Venetian costume, when combined with Iago's corruption of his community's system of valuation, turns her into a debased and trashed woman who is indistinguishable from the courtesan Bianca. When an incensed Othello tells Desdemona: 'I took you for that cunning whore of Venice/ That married with Othello' (IV.ii.93-94), the seventeenth century English audience

⁵⁹³ MacGregor, *Restless World*, p.172.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

of this play – attuned to the idea of Venetian women’s promiscuity and the difficulty of telling a virtuous and valuable lady from a vicious ‘trash’ courtesan – would, perhaps, have understood his angry confusion and his desire to destroy her better than we do. Like Wilson before him, Shakespeare stages the anxiety surrounding the devaluing effect that the uncontrolled (unguilded) presence of the mercantile trash and trifles of tirewomen and ‘strangers’ had on the commonwealth. This acted particularly on the women of that community, whose feminine frailty endangered their material and spiritual treasure and their marital value. Unlike the masculine stability provided by the playwrights and players of the professional theatres, these effeminate mercantile trash and trifles, which were produced, sold and bought by women, acted as a devaluing and unnecessary drain upon the economic wealth of the commonwealth. The play hints at the ways in which mercantile trash and trifles were a dangerously devaluing and infectious influence upon the various forms of treasure (material and immaterial) within the commonwealth.

Indeed, Shakespeare deploys the word trash in *Othello* as a mark of the corruption of the character that uses it. Although the term appears only twelve times within all of Shakespeare’s work, trash is used on three occasions in *Othello* – once to point to the valuelessness of material wealth and twice in reference to people – and in each instance it is Iago who uses the term. Thus, the character that is commonly thought to be the most corrupt and malign figure created by Shakespeare is also the character that most frequently describes things and people as trash. The word first appears in Iago’s description of Roderigo as ‘this poor trash of Venice whom I trace’ (II.i.290), which may be attributed to his distaste for him – Iago sees Roderigo as an otherwise valueless member of his community that might be ‘trace[d]’ or trapped into being a temporarily useful and ultimately disposable financial backer for Iago’s revenge. It is also possible to read this assertion of Roderigo’s valuelessness as a reference to his unmanly and effeminate sexual obsession for Desdemona, who, through Iago’s description of her as a woman that Roderigo might ‘enjoy’ holds a similarity to the courtesan Bianca – who Iago also names as ‘this trash’ (V.i.85).

As a courtesan, Bianca is a vendor of materially unnecessary, spiritually debasing and (potentially) physically infectious trash; but the trash that she

markets is her own body. Through selling her virtue and chastity Bianca stands as an overt example of the commodified female, '[a] hussy...selling her desires' (IV.i.92), which renders her as something bestial – 'a creature' (IV.i.93). Through Bianca's agency, Shakespeare is able to respond to the anxiety regarding the devaluing capacity of femininity and effeminate mercantile trash on the commonwealth. Just as Othello comes to see Desdemona as worthless trash needing destruction, in line with Iago's distorted presentation of her value, Cassio demeans Bianca by following Iago and figuring her as a trivial, inanimate object when he calls her 'the bauble' (IV.i.130). Through marketing her sexual favours Bianca is both the seller and the commodity, like the tirewoman this 'hussy' sells the effeminate, devaluing and infectious 'trash' or 'bauble' of promiscuous sexual encounters for profit. Bianca's prostitution devalues and dehumanises her, just as Stubbes asserts that the ornamented women of the English marketplace were, through their immodest vanity, more like theatrical 'puppets' than real women.

For Roderigo's benefit Iago invents elaborate connections between Bianca and Desdemona, leading to his valuation of Desdemona as a 'super-subtle Venetian' (who may have been costumed as such, as Bianca may have been) who, like a courtesan, will allow Roderigo to 'enjoy' her by 'cuckold[ing]' Othello (I.iii.347-357). Likewise, when conversing with Cassio, Iago portrays her as a woman to make 'wanton the night with...[and] sport for Jove' (II.iii.15-16); to Othello, he links her with immodest women, who 'let God see the pranks/ They dare not show their husbands' (III.iii.206-207). The most damaging example of this created connection comes when Iago causes Othello to mishear Cassio's conversation about his conquest of Bianca as 'proof' of infidelity with Desdemona. Bianca's effeminate and uncontrolled sexual presence within the marketplace becomes the tool for Desdemona's unmerited devaluation: like Lady Conscience before her, the immoral mercantile dealings of another woman lead Desdemona to be 'spot[ted] with all abomination'. As with other mercantile trifles, Bianca is shown to be a destructive influence on the mercantile and spiritual wealth of her community.

Robert B. Heilman seemingly ignores Bianca's status as a courtesan when explaining Iago's description of her as 'this trash' (V.i.85), linking it instead to the

fact that '[h]e cannot or will not understand her love for Cassio'.⁵⁹⁵ However, in blaming Bianca for the violence between Cassio and Roderigo, Iago communicates the damaging effect of the courtesan's presence, as she devalues the 'virtue' of chastity by being paid to dispense with it. The promiscuity practiced by Bianca and alleged of Desdemona threatens patriarchy's power by usurping control over the expression of female sexuality, raising doubts regarding paternity and potentially infecting their bodies with the weakness of sexually transmitted infection.

Desdemona may have acquired a similar 'plague' status to the courtesan, with her capacity for infection affecting Roderigo. His masculine value has been 'trashed' by the immoderate, and thus 'unmanly' desire that Desdemona elicits in him, rendering him more vulnerable to Iago's deceit. The combination of desire and deceit lead Roderigo to follow Desdemona and he is further effeminised as the only male, non-soldier following the army to Cyprus.

However, the audience is aware that the real source of the corrupting infection of valuation within the play's community comes from Iago who, in addition to falsely devaluing Desdemona's marital value by attacking her fidelity, also seeks to invert the traditional material values of the marketplace when he announces that someone '[w]ho steals [his] purse steals trash' (III.iii.162). By 'trashing' the contents of his purse he attempts to improve Othello's valuation of him, by displaying a distaste for avarice he knows the general will esteem. Yet this assertion is also resonant with Barabas – the Jew of Malta's assessment that his considerable wealth is 'paltry...trash' associates his distorted and destructive values with Iago's devaluation of material treasure.

Iago's success in controlling the valuation of people and things within his community, which allows him to devalue Desdemona in Othello's mind, is also employed to create a value shift in the opposite direction by imbuing Desdemona's 'first remembrance' (III.iii.295) from Othello, the handkerchief, with a heightened significance and value. This convergence is revealed when the increased significance Iago attaches to the handkerchief functions as part of his devaluation of others. The efficacy with which Iago manipulates the handkerchief's value can be viewed as having been facilitated, in part, by 'Desdemona's extravagant desire'

⁵⁹⁵ Robert B. Heilman, 'The Economics of Iago and Others', *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 555-571, p.559.

for it, which arguably existed before Iago's tampering.⁵⁹⁶ Emilia's revelation that: 'my wayward husband hath a hundred times/ Wooed me to steal it' (III.iii.296-297) points to his awareness of the handkerchief's potential usefulness. Emilia states that Desdemona 'loves the token' and 'reserves it evermore about her/ To kiss and talk to' (III.iii.297-300), therefore that 'love' may be more akin to 'fetishism'.⁵⁹⁷ Similarly, Korda locates a link with 'the exchanges of gold for mere trifles that were so common in fetish discourse' in Desdemona's claim, 'I had rather lost my purse/ Full of crusdaos' (III.iv.23-24).⁵⁹⁸

This small square of fabric that, as a stage prop, would have been most likely manufactured by one of London's tirewomen appears on the early modern English stage as a slight mercantile object with the capacity to destructively impact the value and valuation of the people that come into contact with it. However, the handkerchief is only able to have this devaluing effect because of its distorted valuation within this particular community, which Iago has schemed to create. In this community of corrupted and inverted valuation, where the deceitful Iago is esteemed to be valuably 'honest' and the virtuous and chaste Desdemona comes to be recognised as 'that cunning whore of Venice', a handkerchief can be symbolic of the security of marital treasure. A number of the members of this Venetian military community in Cyprus, which contains the sexually corrupting influence of the courtesan Bianca and is under the command of a 'stranger' whose foreignness affects his capacity to act as a stabilising masculine influence on valuation within his commonwealth, display their distorted valuation and have that valuation further distorted through the inappropriate significance that they give to this material trifle.

Emilia hopes that procuring the handkerchief will 'please [Iago's] fantasy' (III.iii.303); indeed, he moves from mocking her as promiscuous, naming the 'thing' she offers him 'common' and calling her 'foolish', to valuing her as a 'good wench' the moment she reveals the handkerchief (III.iii.306-318). Under Iago's corrupting influence Othello announces that the handkerchief had been given to his mother by 'an Egyptian...charmer' (III.iv.54-55) and had 'magic in the web of it' (III.iv.67). In doing so he displays the corrupt and destructive esteem that he has for a material

⁵⁹⁶ Korda, *Domestic Economies*, p.145.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., p.146.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

trifle, while also proclaiming his Moorish 'stranger' identity. His mother had been in Egypt, trading in magical, superstitious, pagan and, therefore, heretical objects. Othello's inability to recognise or preserve the real treasure of Desdemona's chastity is tied to his overvaluing of this material trifle as a magical or spiritual treasure, which he decided could act as 'the ocular proof' (III.iii.365) of Desdemona's falseness. Although the handkerchief had, arguably, been overvalued by Desdemona from the start, since she was said to 'love the token', the handkerchief becomes imbued with further significance for her when Othello's jealous outburst causes Desdemona's 'unhappy' reconsideration of her valuation of him, her marriage and the handkerchief, saying: 'I ne'er saw this before,/ Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief' (III.iv.96-98).

Desdemona's helpless situation is typical of the dangerous and destructive inversion of valuation within *Othello* – where trifles are esteemed as valuable and treasure is mistakenly viewed as trash. The lack of masculine Venetian control means that the material and spiritual treasure of this expatriate community in Cyprus becomes vulnerable to the destructive and devaluing influences of a 'stranger' and a courtesan. As an ensign, Iago's authority places him below both Othello and Cassio, however, his inappropriate usurpation of control over valuation within his community is facilitated through these factors; they allow him to invert and corrupt the capacity to differentiate treasure from trash and trifles. In contrast, the early modern English professional stage offered a virtuous masculine protection of valuation within their commonwealth. By staging the devaluing threat posed by the women and male 'strangers' that enable the spread of effeminate trash and trifles, the playwrights and players could position their drama alongside those polemics that supported the ideology of the masculine civic authority of London by defending the treasure of the commonwealth with their literary warnings.

Shakespeare arguably distances his own labours from accusations of devaluing effeminacy by offering, like the Puritan polemics, a warning of the ways in which the mercantile, spiritual and marital treasure of the community might be reduced to valueless trash. The playwrights' desire to defend the masculine value of their labours is clearly enunciated by the playwright Thomas Heywood in his discourse *An Apology for Actors* (1612). Heywood delineates the value of the labours of the

professional theatre, when he describes playing as a necessary ‘ornament to the Citty’ that induced the ‘admiration’ of ‘strangers of all Nations’ and a means for refining the English language (‘which hath ben the most harsh, vneuen, and broken language of the world’) into ‘a most perfect and composed language’, which led ‘many Nations [to] grow inamored of our tongue (before despised.)’⁵⁹⁹ Rather than being unnecessary, devaluing and effeminate trifles the labours of the professional male players and playwrights are being presented as a valuable presence within the English commonwealth, which improved the reputation of England at home and abroad – the theatres added value, drawing the money of foreign visitors and improving the linguistic depth of English.

Heywood further argues that ‘playes haue made the ignorant more apprehensiue’ and have ‘taught the vnlearned the knowledge of many famous histories’: the particular strength of the professional theatres was their capacity to communicate necessary and valuable information to the multitude – even ‘such as cannot reade’.⁶⁰⁰ Unlike the treatises written in defence of the spiritual and mercantile treasure of the commonwealth, including the anti-theatrical polemics, plays were able to present commonwealth discourses to a wider demographic and in a more inclusive manner. Indeed, Heywood asserts that education was the ‘ayme’ of playwriting: early modern England’s professional playing was not devaluing trash but necessary and valuable cultural merchandise that was able:

to teach the subiects obedience to their King, to shew the people the vntimely ends of such as haue moued tumults, commotions, and insurrections, to present them with the flourishing estate of such as liue in obedience, exhorting them to allegiance, dehorting them from all trayterous and fellonious stratagems.⁶⁰¹

Just as the medieval morality plays, performed by itinerant amateurs, presented their audience (regardless of their literacy level) with valuable reminders of their spiritual responsibilities, the early modern professional theatre had the capacity to strengthen, and therefore enrich, the commonwealth by teaching the benefit of patriotism to their audiences. While the history plays, for example, highlighted the destructive danger (both personal and national) of rebellion against the government, the tragedies and comedies discussed in this chapter taught the

⁵⁹⁹ Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors Containing Three Briefe Treatises. 1 Their Antiquity. 2 Their Ancient Dignity. 3 The True Vse of Their Quality* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1612), F3^r.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., F3^v.

necessity of recognising appropriate valuation in order to secure the virtuous, masculine demarcation of treasure from trash and trifles. Wilson, Marlowe and Shakespeare staged value debates in order to educate their audiences to be vigilant against corrupt and effeminate influences on valuation within their commonwealth. The warnings presented in *The Three Ladies*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Merchant of Venice* and, in particular, *Othello* could educate an early modern English audience, preventing them from becoming '[l]ike the base Indian [who] threw a pearl away/ Richer than all his tribe' (V.ii.356-357).

The plays of Wilson, Marlowe and Shakespeare discussed here presented women as a conduit for the devaluing infection of their commonwealth through their mercantile trash and trifles and how their personal worth might be infected and devalued by the uncontrolled presence of these effeminate trash and trifles within the marketplace. It was this valuable, educational property of theatrical merchandise that Heywood presented as evidence for the value of playing and as a defence against anti-theatrical polemical attacks; the educational value of the playwrights' labours provided justification for the professional theatre's claim of equivalence with the authoritative masculinity of the civic guilds and government. Through Heywood's *Apology* and the plays, the men of the professional theatre asserted the value of their word as cultural treasure within the English commonwealth, since it taught the necessity of proper valuation and the danger of trash and trifles to its audience.

Two years after the publication of Heywood's *Apology*, Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) was first staged: the play contains an attack on the theatre's Puritan accusers and a warning about the destructive influence of uncontrolled effeminate trash and trifles on the English commonwealth. Jonson locates his drama within the transient confines of the festal marketplace; in doing so he replicates the similarly nomadic character of travelling theatrical labour in the period before the advent of the professional playhouses. Like the playhouses, this temporary marketplace was also located within the Liberties. Thus, the fairs, like the one held in celebration of St. Bartholomew's Day, could be thematically connected to the past and present of early modern theatrical practise. This connection had also been

used in the Puritan and anti-theatrical discourses to highlight the low-value nature of the wares produced by both industries.⁶⁰²

In a similar manner to the way in which Lady Conscience's virtuous cries in Wilson's *Three Ladies* functioned to confound the allegations of the effeminate valuelessness of unguilded labour, Jonson uses the Puritanical connection between low-value mercantile trifles and the allegedly devaluing trash of the theatre in order to question this ascription of valuelessness. Indeed, Jonson stages Puritans and anti-theatricalists engaging with the wares of this festal marketplace – including an amateur puppet show (the kind of low-value performance that the professional stage aimed to distance itself from) – and depicts their reformation by it, in order to question the worth of the anti-theatrical polemic to the commonwealth.

Jonson presents the Puritan Justice Overdo being altered by his experiences in the play to realise the value of the mercantile practices he had sought to prosecute and destroy; he shifts from being intent to seek out and prosecute 'the yearly enormities of this Fair' (II.i.36-37) to seeing his appropriate role as being '*ad correctionem, non ad destructionem; ad aedificandum, non ad diuendum*' [for improvement, not destruction; for building up not tearing down] (V.vi.107-108). Justice Overdo, the epitome of masculine authority within the commonwealth, comes to recognise his attack on unguilded labour as wrongfully destructive and to have been appropriately reformed by the mercantile activities that he had previously viewed as 'enormities', which like trash and trifles, needed to be removed for the good of the commonwealth.

Further to this, and more tellingly, Jonson depicts the hypocritical Puritan Zeal-of-the-Land Busy announcing himself, and his anti-theatrical argument, to have been 'confuted' (V.v.101) by the argument of a puppet. Busy's arguments are shown to be valueless and insubstantial because an amateur theatrical spectacle

⁶⁰² Jonson's presentation of the 'criers' and traders of Bartholomew Fair also responded to the tastes of seventeenth century '[m]idle-class audiences [who] were drawn to Cries by another kind of curiosity... They were fascinated by suites of vendors because these images depicted a population of unusual, intriguing, and bizarre people. In depictions of street vendors they learned about the colourful, varied, and spicy lives of those who lived below them...they satisfied their inquisitiveness about how the other half lived...The appetite for pictures of peddlers (and indeed for men and women of all stripes) grew so strong that it called forth verbal as well as visual sketches' like those produced by Marcellus Laroon and 'published around the start of the Interregnum'. [Marcellus Laroon, *The Criers and Hawkers of London: Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon*, ed. by Sean Shesgreen (Aldershot: Scolar, 1990), p.11; 19]

performed on a temporary stage, with 'actors' that were merely insubstantial toys or mercantile commodities, is all that is required to confound him. Busy's Puritan assertions about destructive worthlessness are, therefore, shown to be the truly transitory and worthless entity within the English commonwealth. Just as Portia had been able to secure appropriate valuation within her community through utilising the techniques of the professional players, despite her devaluing femininity, the amateur (and therefore less valuable) theatricality of the puppet-show within *Bartholomew Fair* is sufficient to appropriately confound the devaluing and hypocritical corruption of Busy. Theatricality is presented as a valuable treasure within the commonwealth, which was capable of securing appropriate valuation, despite being deployed by a woman (Portia) or the puppets of Bartholomew Fair.

Although *Bartholomew Fair* positions Puritanical male characters as the most ridiculous and highly devaluing influence on their commonwealth and in universal need of reformation in their understanding of valuation, women are also staged as being an actively devaluing presence in this fictional early modern English marketplace; their mercantile activities and their wares are described as false, low-value and spurious trash. Jonson includes a female character as the personification of effeminate marketplace trash – Joan Trash. While the other female characters discussed in this chapter had the potential to corrupt or be corrupted through their interaction with effeminate mercantile trash, or, as with the courtesan Bianca, to become devalued sexual trash through their illicit merchandising of themselves, Joan Trash is an anomalous – albeit logical – progression in the dramatic representation of anxiety over the destructive presence of effeminate trash. Indeed, Joan Trash can be linked, through her wares and herself, to mercantile, spiritual and marital trash and trifles: she is not only the embodiment of the dramatic anxiety about effeminate trash and trifles which have been the focus of this chapter, but she is also connected with the trash and trifles that concerned the earlier chapters of this thesis.

By giving her the surname Trash, Jonson is able to explicitly connect Joan to the effeminate mercantile trash that the anti-theatrical polemicists presented as synonymous with the unguilted labours of the men of the professional theatre; her name 'reinforces the devaluation of market women's wares as defective,

adulterated junk'.⁶⁰³ Equally, through the complaints of the hypocritical Puritan Busy, her gingerbread wares are linked to the material papal trifles and 'trishtrash' of Queen Katherine Parr, Henry Brinkelow, Antoine de Marcourt and John Bale; Busy accuses them of being a 'basket of popery' (III.vi.67-68). In addition to the potential for Joan Trash's low-value gingerbread, the product of her (corrupt/corrupting) female labours, to damage the mercantile commonwealth, buying these ungilded, and therefore effeminate, goods is also presented as an act of idolatry and consuming them is capable of corrupting the soul. According to Busy, Joan Trash's gingerbread is a type of papal trash that jeopardises the spiritual treasure of her commonwealth. Furthermore, Busy also connects Joan Trash's gingerbread to the ultimate example of uncontrolled and valueless female marital commodities – the courtesan or prostitute whose body was ornamented with the corrupting wares of the tirewoman – when he points to her basket of wares and states: 'See you not Goldilocks, the purple strumpet, there? In her yellow gown, and green sleeves?' (III.vi.84-86). Joan Trash's wares are presented as a source of physical infection, a potential source of plague spreading sexual immorality within the marketplace of the English commonweal. An investigation of *Bartholomew Fair* and specifically Joan Trash is, therefore, an appropriate and logical final point, not only for this chapter, but for the thesis as a whole since her presence in Jonson's marketplace of the English commonwealth is the dramatic personification of the anxiety producing valuelessness of mercantile, spiritual and marital trash and trifles.

Joan Trash is, however, securely contained within the masculine boundaries of Jonson's comedy and the professional theatre. Before the main action begins, in 'The Induction on the Stage', the Stage-Keeper is shown '[s]weeping the stage' (Lines 46-47), which 'presumably include[ed] Joan's broken gingerbread – from the previous day's performance.'⁶⁰⁴ In this way Jonson calls attention to the theatre's reliance on women's manufacture and products, while also highlighting the ephemeral and easily destroyed quality of the low-value 'trash' wares which Jonson's play will sweep from the stage. He clears away the connection before the valuable and masculine enterprise of playing can begin. The male professional

⁶⁰³ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.199.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.201.

theatre, as shown through *Bartholomew Fair*, is valuable to the English commonwealth as a necessary containment space for, and therefore protection against the spread of, devaluing and effeminate trash and trifles.

From the start *Bartholomew Fair* is concerned with the threat of infection from material, sexual and spiritual trash and trifles.⁶⁰⁵ The arrival of Bartholomew Fair's traders brings an immediate plague reference, as Leatherhead describes the Fair as 'pestilence dead' before proceeding to locate the potential source of this infection with the 'ginger-bread progeny', sold by that 'crooked' (II.ii.23) embodiment of valuelessness and devaluation, Joan Trash, which 'hinder[s]...the prospect/ of [his] shop' (II.ii.1-6). Joan Trash's mercantile production is presented in a manner akin to devaluing sexual promiscuity, her low-value wares being the 'progeny' of that production, which 'is as "crooked" ...as her commercial practises'.⁶⁰⁶ Additionally, Leatherhead's claim that Trash's gingerbread is made of 'stale bread, rotten eggs, musty/ ginger, and dead honey' (II.ii.11-12), references the 'unsound food – musty and unwholesome corn, unsound cattle, tainted fish and mussels – [the sale of which] was forbidden during the plague.'⁶⁰⁷ The fact that she is an 'independent' tradeswoman, or *feme sole* and her 'trash' goods are being positioned as the alleged epicentre of a plague outbreak acts as another expression of the threat to patriarchy posed by improperly controlled female activity within the English commonwealth.

However, unlike the women discussed previously, with the exception of Portia, Joan Trash is able to defend herself against damaging devaluation. For the women unable to muster a similar defence – the Ladies Lucar and Conscience; Jessica; Abigail; Desdemona and Bianca – the result of their devaluation as commodities in the marital and material marketplace is inescapable. They are rendered up to judicial censure, paternal disowning; poisoning; suffocation, stabbing and arrest respectively. Perhaps the ease with which Trash is able to deflect her devaluation by Leatherhead originates from her presence in a festive marketplace, where misrule can 'subdue the motions of trade...using the norms of the festival as a

⁶⁰⁵ Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p.50.

⁶⁰⁶ Korda, *Labors Lost*, pp.196-197.

⁶⁰⁷ Sherwin, "'All That Glisters Is Not Gold', p.557.

corrective to the norms of commerce'.⁶⁰⁸ Equally, unlike Desdemona, Joan Trash's devaluation is attempted in her presence and, through her vociferous marketplace identity, she is able to directly confront and discredit Leatherhead's claims.

Additionally, there is some hypocrisy in the fact that it is the wares of her accuser that were frequently designated as trash. Leatherhead's goods ('Rattles, drums, halberts, horses, babies...Fiddles' (II.ii.29)) are virtually indistinguishable from those on Lucar's shopping list of infectious 'trifles', those complained of in Harrison's *Historicall Description of Brytaine*, or those shipped to Virginia. Jonson chooses the immoderately pugnacious Wasp, who faults everyone and everything, as the character voicing concerns about the influx of trifles, saying: '[t]hey are a kind o'civil savages that will part with their children for rattles, pipes and knives' (III.iv.31-33). While Wasp's complaint replicates Smith's anxiety about Englishmen accepting an 'appell' in exchange for 'the best Jewell that they haue about them', it is not concerned with any 'stranger' merchant but is instead an attack on the English commonwealth.

Similarly, Wasp describes the members of his community as 'civil savages' who have more in common with 'persons without reason' and 'men out of their wyts', which was how Columbus and Harriot respectively described the Native Americans. Like the author's descriptions of the Native Americans, Wasp describes English people as being willing to pay over the odds – even with their own 'children' – for low-value mercantile trifles. Indeed, the 'glasses, kniues, babies, and other trifles' listed by Harriot as the low-value commodities desired by the commercially naive Native Americans are almost identical to the 'rattles, pipes and knives' that Wasp ridicules his countrymen for purchasing. This is Jonson's ironic commentary on the continuing naivety of his countrymen and the attendant dangers of mercantile trash.

Indeed, throughout *Bartholomew Fair* Jonson questions the efficacy of the Puritanical civic government's authority to stabilise valuation and the secure segregation of the commonwealth's treasure from mercantile, spiritual and marital trash and trifles. Jonson's play presents a lack of appropriate masculine control over valuation (like that which the professional theatre could offer) – its absence allows women's trifles and trash to become an infectious and devaluing force

⁶⁰⁸ Susan Wells, 'Jacobean City Comedy and the Ideology of the City', *ELH*, 48 (1981), 37-60, p.49.

within the commonwealth. Jonson's masculine authority as a playwright conversely allows him to contain the destructive and devaluing infectious potential of both effeminate trash and improper masculine authority within a fictional community, securely separated from the real English commonwealth. Within the play it is Puritan men, the fictional counterparts of those who complained of the devaluing effeminacy of the professional theatres, who are shown to be lacking in the masculine authority to counter the effect of effeminate trash and trifles on the mercantile, spiritual and marital treasure of their community. Indeed, Jonson stages the marital treasure of Win Littlewit and Dame Overdo as vulnerable to the bawdy influence of Knockem and Whit, through the inefficacy and carelessness of their husbands, the proctor (someone employed to manage financial affairs) John Littlewit and Justice Overdo. As Proctor and Justice, these men should epitomise the masculine authority that ensures the stability of valuation within their community: Jonson questions their capacity by staging the devaluation of their wives into promiscuous sexual trifles or marital trash.

Like the ornamented women that Harrison's *Description of England* denounces as prostitutes or 'trulls', Win and Dame Overdo are easily seduced towards this personal devaluation through the effeminate labours of the tirewoman – the 'wires and tires' (IV.v.32-33) that were used to 'stiffen ruffs and hair', the 'green gowns' (IV.v.33) whose colour 'suggested seduction on grass' and the 'crimson petticoats' that were a marker of ostentatious and expensive dress.⁶⁰⁹ For Knockem this costuming serves to 'fit 'em to their calling' as 'green' or sexually available women (IV.v.85-86), which also links them to that other, apparently sexually corrupt, effeminate merchandise – Joan Trash's gingerbread, which Busy describes as 'the purple strumpet...In her yellow gown, and green sleeves?' The women share the gingerbread's low-value, consumable status: lacking appropriate masculine supervision, Win and Dame Overdo have been enticed to forget the value of their chastity by the fashionable trash of tirewomen, and to become trash and trifles themselves.

Jonson, like Wilson, Marlowe and Shakespeare, was dependant upon low-value and effeminate mercantile trash and trifles – produced by tirewomen – for the properties and costumes that were necessities for professional public

⁶⁰⁹ Campbell, ed., *The Alchemist and Other Plays*, n.32-3, p.512.

performance. This dependence provided the anti-theatrical polemicists with a means to attack the labours of the male professional theatre as cultural trash. Indeed, Jonson's performative defence of theatrical value acknowledged and staged the valuelessness women's mercantile labours through both Joan Trash's name and her gingerbread trifles; rather than 'denying the status of stage properties as false wares, Jonson thus highlights it; yet he does so... in service to his project of theatrical reform.'⁶¹⁰ While the form of playing (the costumes and props) may be acknowledged as being low-value material trash and trifles, playwrights like Jonson could nevertheless assert the masculine value of their poetic labours. Although playing was shaped out of effeminate trash and trifles, the poetic 'soul' of the play was valuable treasure, created through virtuous male labour.

Jonson highlights the value of masculine poetic labour by staging Justice Overdo describing 'poetry' as a devaluing infection or 'terrible taint' (III.v.5) within the commonwealth, while hypocritically using the techniques of professional playing (a source of such 'poetry') to deceitfully costume himself as a madman. Unlike Portia's cross-dressed costuming, Overdo's disguise not only fails to secure appropriate valuation within his community but also leads to him being identified as a low-value member of the community being placed in the stocks (IV.i.30-75). The success of Portia's costuming reforms the valuation of her community; the failure of Overdo's begins to reform him to 'be more tender hereafter' (IV.i.73).

Overdo's inability to recognise 'poetry' as the valuable masculine treasure produced by the professional playhouses is evidence of the failure of his masculine authority. Although he is unable to separate necessary treasure ('poetry') from valueless trash and trifles, Overdo attempts to impose his distorted valuation on his commonwealth: Overdo's masculine authority is, therefore, the truly threatening influence on value within his community, eventually completely reformed through the theatrical, poetic value of the amateur puppet-show. In *Bartholomew Fair* it is the masculine labour of poetry manufactured within the professional theatres which is shown to be valuable, specifically through its ability to reform and secure valuation. Those who failed to recognise the true value of the professional theatre and described playing as destructive and devaluing effeminate

⁶¹⁰ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.200.

trash or trifles showed the corruption of their own valuation; they were the threat to the commonwealth. In this Jonson echoes Wilson's position in *The Three Lords* (1590), despite a separation of over two decades Wilson's staging of 'traditional folk celebrations' and use of the morality play tradition is evidence that he, like Jonson, believed that:

All forms of spectacle and ritual are equally valid in achieving the sole criterion of success, and awakened patriotism... Wilson answers not only literary purists who scoff at bear-baiting and puppet shows, but Puritans who decry the frivolity of all public entertainments. Celebrations of past events are needed to reward valor and inculcate the virtues of mighty people.⁶¹¹

In *The School of Abuse* (1579), the anti-theatrical polemicist, Stephen Gosson, described poetry as a powerful entity that could be misused, in order to 'turne reasonable Creatures into brute Beastes'.⁶¹² Three years later, in *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions* (1582), Gosson claimed that the professional playhouses misused the valuable masculine production of poetry. He asserted that the poetic 'soule of your playes is eyther meere trifles, or Italian baudery, or wooing of gentlewomen' that lacked the capacity to teach or reform in any useful or valuable way.⁶¹³ However, the 'taint' and misuse of poetry is most clearly found, within *Bartholomew Fair*, in the protelysing speech of the Puritanical Busy – his language is superfluous – his talk is wasteful and unnecesary trash:

...I was moved in spirit to be here this day in this Fair, this wicked and foul Fair
and fitter may it be a called a foul, then a Fair – to protest against the abuses of it, the foul abuses of it, in regard of the afflicted saints that are troubled, very much troubled, exceedingly troubled, with the opening of the merchandise of Babylon again, and the peeping of popery upon the stalls, here, here, in the high places.
...And this idolatrous grove of images, this flasket of Idols, which I will pull down –
Overthrows the gingerbread (III.vi.78-90)

Busy shows himself to be part of the 'land's faction' of Puritans, who, like the real-world polemicists Stubbes, Harrison and Gosson, were so 'scandalized at toys,/ As babies, hobby-horses, puppet plays' that they acted out in 'the petulant ways/ Yourself [the king] have known, and have been vexed with long', that are spoken of

⁶¹¹ David M. Bevington, *Tudor drama and politics*, pp.191-192.

⁶¹² Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse*, A.2^v.

⁶¹³ Gosson, *Playes Confuted*, C6^r.

in the prologue that was created for the performance at Whitehall.⁶¹⁴ Jonson is highlighting the ways in which the Puritans' devaluing and discrediting of un-guilded production can be as damaging to the commonwealth as the inordinate consumption of the low-value commodities that their polemics reacted against. Equally, through staging the destruction of Joan Trash's low-value wares, Jonson connects these figures to the 'vicious objects' that, upon discovery by members of the civic authority, 'were ritually destroyed in quasi-judicial proceedings that were directed as much at the inanimate object as at its maker.'⁶¹⁵

Thus, through *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson distinguishes the occupation of players both 'from other types of informal commerce that were branded as idle and effeminate' and from the 'hypocritical promoters and puritan preachers [like Busy] who purported to discover market abuses while profiting from such abuses themselves.'⁶¹⁶ Jonson depicts Justice Overdo's inability to recognise poetry as masculine treasure, Joan Trash's gingerbread trifles and Busy's destructive Puritanism as equally devaluing and destructive influences to the spiritual, mercantile and marital treasure of the commonwealth. It is the valuable poetic 'soul' of playing, even when it appeared in a low-value amateur puppet-show, which acts as the means to reform the distorted valuation that had grown within this fictional community.⁶¹⁷

Within *Bartholomew Fair* Jonson presents all playing, but particularly the professional male theatre as a value regulating cultural force. Indeed the professional theatre's masculinity, status as royal servants and capacity to win hearts and minds almost led to an entire company of players 'being condemned as traitors' – the staging of a revival of *Richard II* (with the banned deposition scene reintroduced) on the eve of the Essex rebellion (8th February 1601) could have resulted in the Lord Chamberlain's Men being viewed as co-conspirators in the

⁶¹⁴ Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, 'The Prologue to The King's Majesty', 4-7, p.328.

⁶¹⁵ Korda, *Labors Lost*, p.13.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.182.

⁶¹⁷ See also James Mardoch: '*Bartholomew Fair* becomes an explicit contest of urban literacy, of how to read the city...The successful contestants as those characters in the play, and by the Induction's extension, the observers in the audience, who, like Jonson himself, have achieved the theatrical and authorial ability to reshape the urban environment to their own ends, to exceed the passivity of the ignorant spectator. The destined losers of the contest are all such ignorant spectators.' [James D. Mardock, *Our Scene Is London: Ben Jonson's City and the Space of the Author*, Studies in Major Literary Authors (New York; London: Routledge, 2008), p.98]

revolt.⁶¹⁸ In the event the players escaped any taint from the conspiracy but, as Alexandra F. Johnson points out, ‘the very fact that the conspirators thought that the public performance of a play about political usurpation would aid their cause emphasizes the way that dram continued to be considered part of political discourse even at the end of the Tudor period’ – dramatic performance was understood to have a ‘visceral power’ to inspire change in the minds and actions of the members of the commonwealth.⁶¹⁹

The professional playhouses educated their audiences about the need to contain and control destructive mercantile, spiritual and marital trash and trifles, and to appropriately recognise their difference from valuable masculine treasure. The play presents the Puritan figures and the effeminate marketplace abuses that they react against as excessive and at times devaluing. However, the play also presents their potential value to their commonwealth. Justice Overdo and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy’s complaints against the mercantile abuses and immoral ‘enormities’ – the trash and trifles within the marketplace – are validated though the damaging and devaluing infection of mercantile and marital value that occurs within the staged confines of the Fair. This is evident in the loss of Bartholomew Cokes’ mercantile wealth through theft and the sexual commodification and devaluation of Win Littlewit and Dame Overdo in this marketplace. However, neither Justice Overdo nor Zeal-of-the-Land Busy is shown to be capable of maintaining appropriate valuation within their household, community or commonwealth: indeed, their obsessive concern with seeking out ‘enormities’ and destroying effeminate mercantile trash and trifles is shown to be just as disruptive and destabilising to value as the low-value goods themselves. Since, through Overdo’s disguised, and therefore deceitful, attempts at discovering those ‘enormities’ causes him to be placed in the stocks, unable to enact the justice he is responsible for securing and powerless to protect his own wife’s moral and marital value as she is lured by ‘enormities’ into becoming one herself – a prostitute. Equally, Jonson deploys Busy’s hypocritical and destructive behaviour to highlight the ineffective, ridiculous and devaluing quality of the Puritanical complainant.

⁶¹⁸ Alexandra F. Johnston, ‘Tudor Drama, Theatre and Society’ in *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, ed. by Robert Tittler and Norman L. Jones, Blackwell Companions to British History (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 430-447, p.444.

⁶¹⁹ Johnston, ‘Tudor Drama, Theatre and Society’, p.444.

Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries literary polemics and discourses deployed the terms trash and trifles to attack, variously, the perceived destructive worthlessness of spiritual wares and ideologies and those mercantile goods that entered the English commonwealth through the uncontrolled and unguilded labours of ‘stranger’ merchants and tirewomen. The anti-theatrical writers, in turn, redeployed the attacks found in these polemics and discourses to present the theatre as cultural trash and trifles that endangered the spiritual and material treasure of the commonwealth. Printed polemics and discourses, when describing something as trash or trifles, were calling for the reduction, removal or destruction of the thing they were reacting against: heretical objects and texts (Protestant or Papist) should be purged; unnecessary mercantile wares (foreign and domestic) must be in balance with the necessary goods in the commonwealth through control, taxation or exportation to the New World; and the professional theatres must be closed.

However, the use of the terms trash and trifles by the playwrights of the professional stage performed a different, defensive function. Wilson, Marlowe, and Shakespeare staged women’s trifles and trash women as corrupting and corruptible entities that destructively devalued the spiritual, mercantile and marital treasure of their commonwealths. In doing so, these professional male playwrights redefined their labours and instead connected their own products with the masculine authority that was customarily enjoyed by the men of the recognised civic guilds. By staging the destructive and devaluing potential of trash and trifles these playwrights were able to position their profession as a valuable force within their community, one that had the necessary masculine authority to educate an audience to recognise true value. These plays denied polemical allegations of the professional theatre’s effeminate valuelessness by adopting and adapting those allegations; by deploying the terms trash and trifles the plays redeployed the polemical attack on unguilded labour as effeminate and valueless into an attack on female labour.

Bartholomew Fair functions differently, however, since in addition to denying the players’ parity with effeminate manufacturers of trash and trifles, Jonson’s defence of the masculine value of the playhouses goes further than asserting parity. Indeed, he connected the attacks made against the theatre by civic

government officials and Puritan anti-theatricalists to the same destructive mercantile and spiritual trash and trifles that they used to attack the theatre in their polemics. The destructive failure of Justice Overdo and the Puritan preacher Busy to either recognise or enforce appropriate valuation within their community, or even their own households, is used by Jonson to suggest that the civic authorities and Puritan preachers needed to be reformed themselves.

In the preceding chapters I have shown that the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' were an integral part of a lexicon of valuation, merging the mercantile with the spiritual, which developed and expanded in response to anxiety producing moments in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Just as the use of this lexicon in English writing on the New World, discussed in the previous chapter, responded to – and was influenced by – the spiritual and mercantile anxieties that preceded and continued alongside it, the use of the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' in both theatrical and anti-theatrical writing was similarly influenced. Assertions of theatrical valuelessness in anti-theatrical writing positioned claims about cultural value within the context of the anxieties over spiritual and mercantile value that accompanied other crises – Stubbes connected playing to spiritual trash in its capacity to maintain 'blasphemie'; Gosson presented the theatres as 'shoppes' filled with mercantile 'trashe'; and William Crashaw used the New World as a setting to assert theatrical valuelessness by denouncing players as 'enemies' to the project of exploration and settlement.

In response to these attacks professional playwrights also appropriated the terms trash and trifles, also deployed in the spiritual and economic discourses and polemics of early modern England, in order to defend the masculine authority of their labours from allegations of valueless effeminacy. Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, however, displays the development of this defence, and consequently the manner in which trash and trifles functioned on the professional English stage, since he uses the terms to both defend the masculine authority of his labours and assert the supremacy of playing over the Puritan civic authorities. It is drama alone, Jonson argues, that has the capacity to secure valuation and to properly recognise the destructive and devaluing threat of trash and trifles.

Conclusion



Figure 5. Design for a fan showing the booths and visitors of Bartholomew Fair, c.1730 © Trustees of the British Museum.

In around 1730, over a century after the first staging of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, this extraordinary design for a fan was produced (Figure 5). The image of the festal marketplace of Bartholomew Fair that the fan depicts is recognisable, since it can be easily connected to Jonson's staged representation of the same event. The similarity is particularly evident in the wares on sale at the toy booth, positioned at the bottom left of the fan image (see Figure 6).

The wares of the female vendor who manages this toy booth includes 'dolls, whistles, trumpets, hobby-horses, beads, windmills rattles, bows and arrows, doll's furniture and toy watches.'⁶²⁰ While her feminine mercantile agency connects this toy seller to Jonson's Joan Trash, the goods that she sells in the image are virtually identical to the low-value 'Rattles, drums, halberts, horses, babies...Fiddles' (II.ii.29) that were sold by Leatherhead in *Bartholomew Fair*. Indeed, the fan design acknowledges the destructively devaluing potential of the distracting and effeminate trash and trifles within early modern English marketplace. Like

⁶²⁰ Forsyth with Egan, *Toys, Trifles & Trinkets*, p.148.

Bartholomew Cokes, the man examining the wares of the toy booth has been sufficiently diverted by the mercantile trifles before him for the boy behind him to successfully pick his pockets.



Figure 6. Close up of toy booth from the design for a fan showing the booths and visitors of Bartholomew Fair, c.1730 © Trustees of the British Museum.

In addition to the similarity of the toy woman's wares with those sold by Leatherhead, her toys can also be connected to the 'trifles' (II.335) and 'vaine toys' (II.758) which Lady Lucar and Mercadorus maliciously conspired to import into England in Wilson's *Three Ladies*. Her wares are also like the 'halfe penny cockhorses for children' that William Harrison described as a damaging presence within the English commonwealth.⁶²¹ Similarly, the dolls that sit on her counter are indistinguishable from the 'puppets, and babes which wear brought oute of

⁶²¹ Harrison, *Description of Brytaine*, Piii.

England' to 'delight' the inhabitants of the New World referred to in Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* and pictured in John White's watercolour of 'A wife of an Indian werowance or chief of Pomeiooc, and her daughter' (which was reproduced as an engraving by Theodore de Bry).⁶²²

This presentation of the distracting and devaluing effect of low-value trash and trifles that were sold in the booths of Bartholomew Fair, produced for an eighteenth century fan, highlights the relative constancy in the kinds of mercantile wares that were being appraised as low-value trash and trifles. Through the fan image mercantile trash and trifles continue to be presented as effeminate and unnecessary toys, which are implicitly transient, unruly and a challenge to necessary masculine authority and value. As dramatic creations that share the stage with a puppet show, Jonson's traders, Joan Trash and Lantern Leatherhead occupy a similar position to the fan's female toy seller since the marketplace that she inhabits is also a location for theatrical entertainment. In addition to the toy booth, Bartholomew Fair also contains the peep-show booth of 'The Siege of Gibraltar' (Figure 7) and a scaffold staging a production of 'Judith and Holofernes' (Figure 8). Although the fan presents mercantile trash and trifles in recognisably constant ways – through associating low-value wares with women, performance, deception and the transience of the fair – an evident shift and development in the depiction of trash and trifles has also occurred.

As discussed in the last chapter, the plays of Wilson, Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson, produced in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, staged low-value and effeminate trash and trifles as a response to the spiritual and material crises that were a source of anxiety for England's writers and polemicists. In doing so, these playwrights also sought to distance their own labours from anti-theatrical allegations of the parity between professional playing and trash (both mercantile and spiritual). The creator of the fan has, however, chosen to decorate a tirewoman's trifle with the low-value and destructive potential of the festal marketplace in which it would have been sold. Thus, the value crises that instructed Jonson defensive depiction of Bartholomew Fair's comically devaluing trash continued to be a suitable issue for artistic comment in the next century.

⁶²² Harriot, *Briefe and True Report*, p.45.



Figure 7. Close up of the peep-show of 'The Siege of Gibraltar' from the design for a fan showing the booths and visitors of Bartholomew Fair, c.1730 © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 8. Close up of Lee and Harper's presentation of 'Judith and Holofernes' from the design for a fan showing the booths and visitors of Bartholomew Fair, c.1730 © Trustees of the British Museum.

However, the decision to represent the festal site in which mercantile trash and trifles were sold upon the sort of fashionable, effeminate and unnecessary trinket

that would have been sold there, is evidence of a new knowingness or self-reflexivity in the deployment of trash and trifles that emerged in the period following that explored by this thesis. Staging devaluing and effeminate mercantile trash and trifles allowed Wilson, Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson to acknowledge and defend against the comparison of professional playing with the low-value labours of the tirewomen that was a feature of the anti-theatrical polemics. However, this fan is decorated, and therefore made desirable, with an image that announces its connection to the marketplace as a trivial and unnecessary fashion item, of the type that would be sold there. This fan celebrates its status as trash.

By exploring the shifting boundaries of the terms trash and trifles during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this thesis has shown the way in which the language of valuelessness evolved in response to an ongoing spiritual and material value crisis. Cataloguing and discussing the shifting presence of concepts of trash in the polemics, discourses and drama of the period provides evidence for a shared anxiety that developed in response to the political, social and religious upheavals of the period. This thesis has used the proliferation of terms 'trash' and 'trifle' in the literatures of the early modern English commonwealth to offer a greater understanding of the contemporary experience of the Reformation, expanding trading relationships, New World exploration and the rise, popularity and economic success of unguilded labours (as exemplified by the work of the men of the professional theatre and tirewomen). The development and spread of meaning of the words in the semantic range of trash and trifles, or the upsurge in 'trash talk', connects to a crisis of valuation that was being experienced by the people of the early modern English commonwealth.

Queen Katherine Parr and her fellow Reformers highlighted the capacity of the Bishop of Rome's 'feyned tryfles' and 'rifraf' to infect spiritual treasure with destructive mercantile devaluation. In debates about the corrupt valuelessness of the religious practises promoted by the Papacy, the terms 'tryfles', 'rifraf' and 'trishtrash' were used to articulate anxieties about the spiritual value crisis that was being experienced by their community, while in the process shaping the identity of the new Church of England.

Sir Thomas Smith's description of the 'unnecessary' mercantile 'trifles' in the *Discourse* reacted to the problems attendant on the growth of international trading, which led to an economic value crisis that was caused by a material imbalance in England – 'stranger' merchants were blamed for exchanging the 'necessary' treasure of the commonwealth for 'unnecessary' foreign trifles. Smith's trifles, like those complained of by Andrew Boorde and William Harrison, were low-value mercantile objects that inspired spiritually devaluing vanity in the English consumer; the Reformers' complaints about the Bishop of Rome's devaluing 'trishtrash', which merged the spiritual with the mercantile, were therefore mirrored in Smith, Boorde and Harrison's anxiety regarding the economically and spiritually devaluing presence of mercantile trash and trifles within the English commonwealth. In merging the mercantile with the spiritual, the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' became useful linguistic tools for structuring and defending the Protestant English commonwealth as a separate and valuable mercantile and spiritual community.

This merging of the spiritual with the mercantile in these terms can be traced back to Chaucer's characterisation of The Pardoner in *The Canterbury Tales*, and was subsequently used by writers of New World exploration narratives to assert the value – for both the commonwealth and its inhabitants – of investing in the future voyages of England's merchant adventurers. The creators of those documents that promoted the necessity of continuing investment in England's overseas exploration, including the English translation of Bartolomé de Las Casas' *The Spanish Cruelties*, Richard Hakluyt's edited compilations of travel literature (such as *The Principall Nauigations*), Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* and John White's watercolour images, drew upon an early modern English anxiety about spiritual and mercantile trash and trifles to support their arguments for 'venting' and its efficacy.

Early modern England's literature of discovery presented the exploration of, and trade with, the New World as a means to repurpose the mercantile trifles within the English commonwealth, the prime cause of the economic crisis evaluated in Sir Thomas Smith's *Discourse*, into a valuable export commodity. Exporting low-value trash and trifles to the New World would not only counteract the accepted capacity of these wares to damage and devalue the treasure of the

commonwealth, but would also turn them into a useful tool for the displacement of violent Spanish rule – in favour of Protestant English protection – and free the indigenous population from the spiritually destructive Papal ‘trishtrash’ that was spread by Catholic Europe’s colonial endeavours in the New World.

The early modern English writers of the discourses and polemics that advocated the necessity of economic and spiritual reform deployed the terms trash and trifles to attack the objects and elements that they deemed to be unnecessary, worthless and devaluing to their commonwealth. Later, overseas exploration and trade would be presented as a valuable way to remove trash and trifles from the English commonwealth and replace them with the valuable gold and silver of the New World. Through the English literature of exploration, mercantile trash and trifles were shown to have a useful and valuable purpose, since they could be traded for treasure in the New World.

However, playwrights like Wilson, Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson, staged the devaluing, and sometimes comical, effect of the value crises that resulted from the presence of effeminate trash and trifles within the marketplace, in order to defend the value of their own labours in comparison. Dishonest women and ‘stranger’ merchants infected their on-stage community with trash and trifles that were materially valueless (making them economically threatening) and spiritually corrupting (through their capacity to inspire sinful vanity within the community). The professional theatre, by comparison, represented a stabilising influence for valuation within their community due to their status as a workforce of Englishmen. The work of the playwrights discussed in this thesis staged effeminate and foreign trash and trifles as a defensive counterpoint to highlight the value of their own masculine English labour. In doing so, these playwrights also expanded the range of the terms trash and trifles. In 1581, Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London* staged the corrupting mercantile activities of Lady Lucar and her accomplice, the ‘stranger’ merchant Mercadorus, in order to highlight the capacity for effeminate mercantile trash and trifles to threaten the material and spiritual treasure of the English commonwealth. However, by 1614, the correlation between the labours of women in the marketplace and potentially destructive low-value wares which could devalue the mercantile and spiritual treasure of the community was staged in Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* through the single figure of Joan Trash.

Queen Katherine Parr's anxiety over the Bishop of Rome's 'trifles' and 'riffraff' can be traced, through Sir Thomas Smith's complaints about 'unnecessary' and foreign mercantile 'trifles' and the New World's potential to alleviate the threat of trash and trifles in England identified by Hakluyt, Harriot and White, to the character of Joan Trash in *Bartholomew Fair*. In each of these cases, which feed into, yet remain distinct from one another, the creators of the sixteenth and seventeenth century texts that deployed the terms 'trash' and 'trifle' responded to the value crises and debates of their period (Reformation, devaluation, expanding trading relationships, overseas exploration and the rise of the professional theatre). It was during this period that a specific lexicon of valuation emerged and was developed, which merged the mercantile and spiritual in the terms 'trash', 'trifle' and their cognates. Trash, trifles, and the crises in value that their deployment signifies are however a perpetual and enduring concern.

The evidence for this lasting concern and interest in trash and trifles – and the developing ways in which those concerns were deployed – is found in the artist's decoration for a fan, in around 1730, which depicts the transitory labours of women within the festal marketplace of Bartholomew Fair on a ladies fashion object, offering trash for trash's sake. Equally, the numerous books and articles about 'trash' that have published in the United Kingdom in the twenty-first century – including Greg Kennedy's *Ontology of Trash* (discussed in the Introduction) – shows that the lexicon of valuation developed in early modern England is still being developed and deployed in response to the continuing emergence of crises in valuation.

While the deployment of the terms 'trash and 'trifles' may seem, on the surface at least, to be a relatively benign act that simply marks out objects, behaviours and ideologies as valueless things to be discarded and forgotten, this thesis has shown the reality to be far more complex. In the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, as much as the twenty-first, the use of 'trash' and 'trifles' is symptomatic of the anxieties felt by a community – trash is not simply the binary opposite of 'treasure', it is its destroyer. The previous chapters have shown that when 'trash' or 'trifles' are described it is in relation to a perceived threat: to the health of the environment (Introduction), to religious values (Chapter 1), to the fiscal health of

the nation (Chapter 2), to colonial ethics (Chapter 3) or to the value of the playing (Chapter 4).

Throughout the period covered by this thesis assertions of valuelessness, which were made through the use of the terms trash and trifles (and their cognates), occurred in a unique way. The merging of the mercantile and the spiritual became an effective way to comment upon the shifting valuations that were a result of the profound societal changes caused by the Reformation and the voyages of discovery. The anxieties over valuation that this thesis has explored are symptomatic of the historical moment in which they were shaped; by looking at the texts produced in sixteenth and early seventeenth century England that confronted, and attempted to provide a resolution for, this anxiety a researcher is able to locate the building blocks of the Protestant English commonwealth. Debates about valuation were vital for the shaping of the commonwealth's spiritual, mercantile and, eventually, imperial identity. The texts produced by Queen Katherine Parr, Sir Thomas Smith, William Harrison, Philip Stubbes, Richard Hakluyt, William Shakespeare *et al* were integral to the redefinition of England in this transitional period – as it became spiritually separated from Rome, entered into a burgeoning global capitalist market and expanded its national boundaries. Concerns about trash and trifles were a 'necessary' (value adding) part of promoting these endeavours, while simultaneously highlighting the need to protect the commonwealth from these endeavours becoming 'unnecessary' (devaluing).

The complex and extensive use of trash and trifles, and the terms related to them, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was symptomatic of the anxiety caused by the shifting parameters of religious, mercantile, political and cultural experience. Through investigating the expanding and evolving use of the terms trash and trifles – and the sixteenth and early seventeenth century events and value crises which those terms responded to – this thesis has shown how a greater understanding of the way in which valuation worked in early modern England provides a better understanding of the period as a whole. I believe that examining the deployment of the terms trash and trifles within the discourses, polemics, drama and art of early modern England can contribute to our understanding of how the spiritual and mercantile crises of the Reformation,

overseas trading, global exploration and the rise of a leisure industry that included the professional playhouses were experienced by those who lived through them.

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Counsel, and Thomas Smith Esquire, His Sonne (Imprinted at London: By Henry Binneman for Anthonhson [i.e. Anthony Kitson], dwelling in Paules Churc [sic] yard at the signe of the Sunne, 1572)

----- *A Compendious or Brieve Examination of Certayne Ordinary Complaints, of Diuers of Our Country Men in These Our Dayes Which Although They Are in Some Part Vniust [and] Friuolous, yet Are They All by Vvay of Dialogues Thoroughly Debated [and] Discussed* (Imprinted at London: In Fleetstreate, neere vnto Saincte Dunstones Church, by Thomas Marshe, 1581)

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Vives, Juan Luis, *A Very Frutefull and Pleasant Boke Called the Instructio[n] of a Christen Woma[n]/ Made Fyrst in Laten/ and Dedicated Vnto the Quenes Good Grace/ by the Right Famous Clerke Mayster Lewes Uiues/; and Turned out of Laten into Englysshe by Rycharde Hyrd. Whiche Boke Who so Redeth Diligently Shall Haue Knowlege [sic] of Many Thynges/ Wherin He Shal Take Great Pleasure/ and Specially Women Shal Take Great Co[m]modyte and Frute Towarde The[n]crease of Vertue & Good Maners* ([London]: Imprinted

at London in Fletestreet/ in the house of Thomas Berthelet nere to the
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from the Liues, Actes, and Labors of Saturne, Iupiter, Hercules, and AEneas:
Originalles of the Brutons, and English-men, and Occasion of the Brutons
Their First Aryuall in Albion. Continuing the Same Historie Vnto the Tribute to
the Romaines, Entrie of the Saxones, Inuasion by the Danes, and Conquest by
the Normaines. With Historicall Intermixtures, Inuention, and Varietie:
Proffitably, Briefly, and Pleasantly, Performed in Verse and Prose by William
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Swéete Flowers, (or Rather Fancies) of Honest Loue. The Thirde, the Arbour of
Vertue: Wherein Slaunder Is Highly Punished, and Vertuous Ladies Nad
Gentlewomen, Worthily Commended. The Fourth, the Orcthard of Repentance:
Wherein Are Discoursed, the Miseries That Followe Dicing, the Mischiefes of
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